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THREE ADOLESCENT PROGRAMMES, TWO TRAINING CENTRES, ONE AMI

Paul Pillai

On a quiet afternoon in September 2015, with castle turrets in the distance above and cobblestoned pavements below, a group of Montessorians gathered in the high-ceilinged lecture room of the Montessori Institute of Prague (MIP). The topic for discussion that afternoon, and for the next 24 months to follow, was the “New Humanity”, and the prepared environment for the third plane of development that would allow this new man to emerge.

With characteristic ambition and vigour, Montessori schools Andilek (MSA) and its partner organization MIP had won European Union funding for a group of 6 organisations – AMI, two training centres: the Maria Montessori Institute in London and the Montessori Institute of Prague, and three schools: Lära for livet in Sweden, Montessori_Initiative Wieden in Vienna, and The Montessori Place in East Sussex – to create from first principles a blueprint for the development of adolescent environments in Europe.

The group was challenged to design a ‘manual’ for building adolescent environments in Europe. The invitation was to consider all that has been learned from the experiences of the international Montessori community over the past 30 years, but to go back to first principles, and to return to Montessori’s writings.

We sought to identify, and attempted to answer, the important pedagogical questions to consider when starting an adolescent community. This was no easy task. In the end we felt it would be most useful to explore the key questions we have grappled with in this work with adolescents.

The related challenge we faced was the tension between the high ideals of the text, and the “facts on the ground”. Montessorians find themselves in all sorts of situations and are called on to prepare environments for adolescents in all sorts of contexts. What is essential? What is the icing, and what is the cake?

Our contribution to the work is to engage in public conversation about the texts. Montessori’s writings are a material for our own development. We must not move to abstraction too quickly. If we are not returning to this textual material again and again, by ourselves and

with others, discovering it anew each time, we lapse into a formula, and insight rarely comes from a formula - only from a material. We have found revisiting the texts as a group reveals fresh insights.

Guided by the texts, in Prague we discussed unstructured time and the work cycle; in Vienna the three period lesson and the control of error; in Sweden real work and maximum effort; and in East Sussex freedom and responsibility. Each conversation was rich and full, inspiring and challenging in equal measure. Our understanding deepened and broadened through these discussions, we began to put our thoughts down on paper as a collection of essays, presented here.

The collection begins with Jenny Hoglund's emphatic case for the developmental nature of our work with adolescents. She presents an overview of the four planes of development, reviews the human tendencies and their operation in the third plane, and proposes a set of key principles to respect with adolescents. Her writing sets the stage for our work: education as an aid to life. Are we offering an environment that works with the nature of the adolescent? Do we truly believe that third plane education is something different from second plane education?

Sasa Lapter explores the key principles of Montessori pedagogy, setting out most helpfully, at once succinct and comprehensive, the framework of our work – a framework that spans the grandeur of the cosmic vision, to the specifics of analysis of difficulty, maximum effort and control of error.

Lizzie Kingston and Vikki Taylor offer two short and insightful pieces that illuminate our understanding of the prepared environment for the third plane. The first identifies maximum effort as the context within which development takes place; and the second identifies the control of error as essential to auto-education. Do we routinely witness maximum effort? Is auto-education a reality? Do the adolescents have uninterrupted time so they can go deep into their work?

Jenny Hoglund then describes the kinds of work she views as essential for the third plane: the daily contributions in community living, the acts of transforming the environment in response to felt needs, the engagement with wider society through production and exchange, and the freedom of study that allows individuals to follow individual interests. All these must be available for the adolescent to experience work as meaningful.

An article on freedom and responsibility follows – where I suggest that for a third plane environment to be developmental, it must offer real responsibilities in the social organisation, and true freedom in individual work. In order to embrace these ideas, it is essential that the

third plane adolescent be seen as something entirely different from the second plane child, and needing a radically different environment: an environment offering real work and true study.

Radka Jandova has sifted through Montessori's writings with great care, drawing out all references to place, so that we might have a clearer understanding of the significance of work on the land. Exploring why Montessori thought life "in the country" was essential for adolescents may help us better prepare suitable environments for these young adults, no matter where we are. Radka also discusses Montessori's vision of a world where examinations are replaced by passages of independence that mark the evolution of the human being.

Sasa Lapter then discusses the elements of social organisation that form the primary developmental material for the adolescents – the farm, the residence, the shop, the guesthouse, and the museum of machinery. This is followed by an essay discussing the study and work plans and how these fit within the broader context of freedom and responsibility in the third plane.

In elaborating on the prepared environment in the third plane, Sasa Lapter writes about the role of the adult– to protect the adolescent, to help them understand their role in society, to support them in developing economic independence, and to provide opportunities for them to use the functional, intellectual and moral independences they have gained in the first two planes.

The collection concludes, appropriately, with Jenny Hoglund reminding us that the purpose of our work is greater and larger than any educational syllabus could possibly devise, that it is as great as the creation of a new humanity.

Every child, Montessori said, is a hope and a promise for humanity; and it is the prepared environment that makes the fulfilment of that promise a reality. If you are considering starting an adolescent environment, know that you are not alone. There are others on this journey with you. We hope this collection of essays proves useful to you. We encourage you to consider the questions it raises, to ask questions of your own, to share those questions, and your own answers with us, and to join us as fellow travellers on this journey of education as an aid to life.

THE FOUR PLANES OF DEVELOPMENT

Jenny Höglund

Maria Montessori is the great discoverer of the potentialities of the child and she also understood the importance of supporting and protecting these potentialities in order for humanity to evolve. Not only did she see the child's place in universe, but also mankind's. The child is the constructor of tomorrow's man and as such, she saw the child as the potential keeper and creator of the world.

As a scientist Montessori was not merely interested in teaching, she was interested in human development. Development is about changes and she saw it as the process the individual undergoes, from birth to maturity, the goal being a fully functioning independent adult. Development is laid down by nature and thus follows universal laws. The nature of children's work is for their development.

Montessori was interested in all development and the whole individual. She does not limit herself to the development of the intellect, but takes an interest in the social, moral, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects as well.

The purpose of education is to develop life, to help life. Education then becomes more than the mere passing of knowledge. It is to offer real life experiences, which will provide the children not only with a sense of belonging but also with a moral compass which will help to create solidarity and an awareness of the contributions individuals can make.

Montessori recognised that human development follows natural laws and through her observations of children she came to the conclusion that at different periods we have to do with different types of minds and personalities. Some things were to be observed with the young children and other things with the older children. She thus identified different stages of development that people go through before they mature and she called these stages the four planes of development.

The first plane is from birth to age six and is known as the plane of early childhood or infancy. The second plane takes place from age 6 to age 12 and is called the plane of childhood. The third plane of development lasts from age 12 to age 18 and is the plane of adolescence.

After this there is no longer any major transformation, we just get older. However, Dr. Montessori makes it clear that the development of a person does not end at the age of eighteen. The fourth plane is from age 18 to 24 and is called the plane of adulthood or maturity.

Each stage of development contributes to the whole personality of the adult. Since human development is a continuum, education must be a continuum.

At different stages of development the child displays very different characteristics and behaviour and have very different needs, which are specific to the particular plane. At each plane the child is building skills, which are also interior, and behaviours in preparation for the next plane and the child possesses particular tools, e.g. human tendencies that will enable the child to achieve the goals of the plane.

This means that at different stages of life children learn in different ways and therefore education needs to correspond to these different ways of learning. Therefore we do not have one approach to education but four approaches, the four planes of education.

The educational approach is important; it must correspond to the needs of the child.

Our plan of study is not for curriculum or textbooks. This does not mean that they cannot use textbooks, but they should not be used by textbooks. The students should not be restricted by the curriculum of traditional schools. We have a different aim in mind. Our aim is always to aid life, development. When we say that we follow the child, we follow the development of the child. That is at the centre.

Because of these planes of development, the environment becomes important. It has to be prepared for each plane of development. If we are to create an environment that will help the children and their characteristics, we do not just merely create an environment to impart information to a child. Nor do we start with easy things when they are young and then progress in difficulty. It is wrong to think that the older you are the more you can learn. Adolescents, e.g., do not learn as well as young children do. Therefore it is important to offer different things at different planes.

Being aware of the different aspects of a child's development, the four planes of development offer a framework, which provides a holistic view of the development of the child and also his or hers place in universe.

HUMAN TENDENCIES

Jenny Höglund

All children possess constructive powers that drive them to build up themselves. These constructive powers Montessori called human tendencies. They are nature's help to make something of ourselves. They assist us in our task to survive and to adapt to our environment.

„Yet, there exists in this inert being a global power, a 'human creative essence,' which drives him to form a man of his time, a man of his civilization. And, in this faculty of absorption that he possesses, he follows laws of growth that are universal for the whole of mankind.” (MONTESORI, MARIA. THE ABSORBENT MIND. OXFORD, ENGLAND: CLIO PRESS, 2002, P.53)

The human tendencies urge the child to develop and the child does this on the expense of his or hers environment. Therefore the environment is of great importance since it will support the development of each individual.

We do not experience development in the same way, there are many variations and besides, there are so many choices to make. These possibilities allow us to be creative.

The human tendencies guide us throughout life and therefore guide our individual development. Thus the tendencies will help the young child to become a person, to develop his or her own personality. The child will make use of them, to build an individual suited to his time. The tendencies allow us to orient ourselves to our environment and who we are in relation to it and to the people in it. When the children feel comfortable and familiar with the environment they can act more independently in the environment and make choices and decisions on their own.

To orientate oneself allows us to explore securely, finding points of references or landmarks. Orientation is to be able to recognise and create order. We need to orient ourselves to our environment, not just physically, but also establishing who I am in this environment and my relationship to it. The adolescent orients him or herself to his or hers peers in the community outside his family. There is also the aspect of becoming an adult. The adolescent needs to find their time and place in order to step into the adult world. They ponder about questions like: What does it mean to be an adult? What do I need to learn, what do I need to know? These

points of orientation can serve as a safe place for the adolescents as well as a springboard for new exploration, moving from the known to the unknown.

Once we have got our bearings in and meaning from our immediate environment we can experience order and this brings us not only to feel secure but also to be courageous in exploring our surroundings. Order is a place to come to at the end of the orientation to make it possible to feel safe and explore.

To explore is an activity where the end is not defined. The adolescents explore their own feelings, the different roles that they play and which the farm offers, what it means to be a contributing member of a community and what society could really be like. They also explore their own body and the changes happening to it. It can be an open-ended learning experience, where the end is not restricted. It includes observation of adults and peers. These observations are often cunningly accurate, but without malice.

We all have a drive to engage in meaningful work or activities, which is another tendency we all share. However the work has to be purposeful and real and of two kinds, manual as well as academic.

"Only practical work and experience lead the young to maturity." (MONTESSORI, MARIA, THE ABSORBENT MIND, KALAKSHETRA PRESS, 1973, P. 21)

Thus it becomes a means for exploration and practising of the roles through purposeful work. Both head and hands are involved, practical experiences alongside academic studies. There are many different kinds of work. There is work to sustain the social organization as well as work as production and exchange. This latter kind of work connects to the adult world and puts the adolescents on the road to economic and social independence, both important for the adolescents' development toward adults. There is a real life application of work and then understanding that there is no instant gratification. To truly understand and embody something goes for everything the adolescent does. It offers them the opportunity to find out what they are good at and refine this. The work thus allows for opportunities to experience variations. The adolescents develop the ability to do any work whenever and with whomever.

The tendency to calculate is close to work, which now involves not only economic calculations, but also being able to calculate situations and their possible outcomes. This will help the adolescents in informing their decision-making.

Through our capacity to concentrate we constantly refine ourselves and continue to perfect what we do. This happens with the right kind of practical work. The right kind of work

offers maximum effort, there has to be a challenge as a definite purpose, work that demands something of them.

Our creative imagination needs to be used in a good way. How can the adolescents transform their environment to make it better? They are trying to improve what they do, to make it more efficient and to function well. They are interested in doing things better in less time.

Adolescents also like to think about the future, especially the practical aspects of what it could look like, environmentally like going from a green house to an eco village.

In order for us to succeed we need to be independent. This independence gives us power to think and act, something crucial for development. The ability to think and act on oneself is essential if we are to be contributing members to society. An independent child is recognised by being motivated from within and ability to judge oneself, both giving the child a sense of satisfaction.

Another tendency important to being a member of any kind of human group is the tendency to communicate. It is important for the moral and social development, to be aware of what one says and does in order to have a harmonious community. We all have a social drive to seek out others, communicate with them and express ourselves. This is incredibly important, that is why a social group is needed. The adolescents need to use communication as a means to live peacefully with their community, making decisions, discussions, seminars, self-expression, sharing knowledge and experiences so that they learn from each other. Communication has made it possible to share knowledge and it also provides an emotional experience, communicating one's inner self to another person. This supports the tendency to associate with others, since it makes us feel that we belong and gives us our cultural identity. We are coming together as a social group, just for the pleasure of coming together. Intelligence comes from group intelligence; something needed to make change possible, a change for the better. It takes a group to make it happen. This understanding comes at the end of this plane of development, when the meta-cognition has matured and the adolescents can understand others and empathize.

Belonging to a group offers shared experiences. This then helps us understand how much we all have in common in spite of differences and our different ways of living. Ultimately this will foster the idea of us being what Montessori named as One Single Nation.

MONTESSORI PRINCIPLES THIRD PLANE

Jenny Höglund

There are some fundamental principles to respect when approaching the adolescents during the third plane of development.

Education has to be based on natural development. Montessori was not interested in teaching a subject, but to understand the development of the child and to respond to these developmental needs. Therefore we need to be aware of the developmental tasks of the adolescent, that of creating a new social being, the adult.

For this a prepared environment is very important, an environment prepared for adolescents. Within this environment there needs to be freedom within limits. It is an environment that holds materials essential for the development of the adolescent. The materials analyse complex items and concepts into their elements, there is an isolation of quality. Thus we can understand how branches of knowledge can be taken apart and offered.

So we offer an environment that liberates, but not abandons, an environment that co-operates with the nature of the individual, the adolescent. There is no timetable for teaching, a very important freedom. There will be formal lessons, but more often than not there is an educating of the subconscious, informal lessons that later will become conscious knowledge. This is where the materials are crucial, materials as an indirect preparation to bring something into consciousness that already exists in the subconscious. Abstraction will also emerge this way together with a self-realization of one's strengths and weaknesses and how to compensate for those weaknesses.

It is important to understand that learning is not determined by the teacher, but by the sensitivities, nature's help to development.

"The child should be no longer restricted to the environment of the school, to the vaster environment in which he learned and understood the how and the why, nor be so close to the family from which he depends financially; he wants to 'live' society. He should go further away."
(MONTESSORI, MARIA, THE FOUR PLANES OF DEVELOPMENT, AMI 1971)

The adolescents are in a period where they are sensitive to a personal dignity and to

justice. This requires a prepared environment where the adolescents are in charge and have to fend for themselves. It is through their social environment that the sensitivities can operate and serve the adolescents. An aspect of the environment is that of mixed ages, at least three different age groups. Through living in a community as a contributing member and experiencing division of labour to make the community satisfy its needs the adolescents will come to see who they are and not only what they are good at but also what they are good for. There is an increasing understanding that there is a responsibility attached to their lives. They get a glimpse of whom they can become and the role they can play in society.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MONTESSORI PEDAGOGY

Saša Lapter

As much as Montessori environments for children and adolescents of different ages substantially differ, they are all based on a set of general principles which find their application across the age groups and environments:

- The basic idea of the Montessori education and the major work of the adult in a Montessori environment is to help life. We support the development of the human personality by working with nature, not against it.
- The human personality develops by the process of self-construction. By freely interacting with a limited environment which connects the child to the reality and provides motives for activity, the child or the adolescent exercises a maximum effort and thus builds and integrates different functional aspects of the self, to become a fully functional, independent human being ready to make his contribution to the world. Adult supports this process, but the work of self-construction is done by the child.
- The unique contribution of the mature adult, called by Maria Montessori his cosmic mission, is the construction of a man-made environment (the supranature) towards a world of peace.
- In order to work with nature, we must understand the natural process of human development. From birth to maturity, human being proceeds from one distinct plane of development to the next, each one with its own sensibilities and psychological characteristics.
- For each plane of development, adults construct a prepared environment that answers to the sensibilities and psychological characteristics of that plane. This environment provides motives for spontaneous activity of the child or adolescent and thus supports his self-construction.
- The existence of a mixed-age group is a prerequisite for the dissemination of culture within the social setting of a prepared environment for a given plane of development.
- The acquisition of culture within the process of self-construction is fundamentally based on indirect development of subconscious knowledge, not on the superficial interaction based on conscious teaching and being taught
- Adults assist the child in the acquisition of culture by materializing the abstraction through analysis of the difficulties, supporting the natural learning process and providing means of control of error inherent in the prepared environment

CONTROL OF ERROR

Lizzie Kingston, Vikki Taylor

Montessori activities (and Montessori environments) contain a control of error which empowers the individual to correct himself. This control is an inbuilt feedback loop found in all Montessori environments, which supports the underlying Montessori principle of 'auto-education'. Being able to correct oneself is not only a more enjoyable way to learn but eradicates the need for constant intervention by the teacher and removes any kind of emotional attachment, the individual is learning skills for the self rather than through another.

The control of error allows the individual to continually try again; if something does not go well or is not quite right at first, it immediately makes the individual repeat the exercise. This leads to perfection and self-mastery. Each time repetition takes place the individual progresses.

The individual develops the power to persevere and is not afraid to make 'mistakes'. In fact in a Montessori environment a mistake is viewed as an opportunity for learning. Whenever an individual encounters a difficulty or challenge he faces it head on and seeks a solution. By being able to do this for himself he grows in confidence and self-esteem, which in turn leads to increasing independence.

The control of error allows the individual to discriminate, make judgements and decisions through his own developing intelligence culminating in an individual of strong and decisive character confident in their own capabilities.

This is a preparation for life, the developing of an attitude of the mind that will endure throughout life. It prompts the individual to ask questions as to their progress and how, if at all, they are going to move forward. Challenges are not seen as problems instead the individual seeks more ideal solutions. For the adolescent the social groups acts as a powerful control of error as well as the practical problems that arise in the community that require a response.

EFFORT AND ENGAGEMENT

Lizzie Kingston, Vikki Taylor

From a Montessori perspective, work has a special significance in supporting the self-construction of the individual. To achieve this, the work must be developmental and offer real opportunity for effort and engagement.

Effort is an inner impulse that we must support towards maximum exertion. Maximum effort is a guide at each stage of growth. In the Children's House it is evident in the young child trying carrying a tray with a glass of water without spilling it. In the elementary years, it takes on an intellectual perspective; grappling with the answer to a mathematical problem. For the adolescent, maximum effort comes from manual or intellectual work in a social context.

Maximum effort comes from the right kind of work. It cannot be prescribed and does not simply mean more advanced work. Maximum effort comes about naturally in the right kind of environment. To induce this, consideration must be given to the nature of the prepared environment; to the location, the role of the adults and opportunities for social organisation. There must be opportunities for practical purposeful work in a social context as well as the potential for historical and scientific studies.

Genuine engagement has transformational capacities at any stage of development. Once again, the environment can only provide the opportunity for engagement, it cannot be forced. Adolescents need meaningful things to do and have a strong urge to build relationships and be involved with others. The environment must provide opportunities to meet these needs. It must offer the adolescents motives for activity with attainable goals which match their capabilities and offer them the chance to be successful. Engagement also comes through curiosity and so the adolescents need to be able to follow their interest for an uninterrupted time period so that they can delve deeply into their work. Adolescents are also striving to connect to their authentic selves and self-expression is an important pathway to engagement at this age.

WORK FOR THE THIRD PLANE ADOLESCENTS

Jenny Höglund

"It is now essential that his hands should be provided with real work: I mean, such work as implies responsibility. ...it is necessary for him to undertake some such occupation as work upon the land; that he should begin to know by experience how to earn his own living." (MONTESORI, MARIA, AMI COMMUNICATIONS 2011/1-2: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION, P.59)

There is work or occupations within the community, which foster a social responsibility. There is work for the common good of the community. Taking responsibility without being asked – to be able to spot that – spontaneously – fosters a social responsibility, which is important for the moral and social development. The adolescents experience a division of labour, each member of the community contributing to the social organization. It is work that leads to social independence. Without this work other work and study cannot happen.

Such work would be:

- Care of animals – morning, evening
- Meals
- Household upkeep
- Laundry
- Maintenance –the daily upkeep
- Shopping
- Book-keeping
- Production
- Garden
- Communication

There is work which rises from a need within their environment or community. This is work that has to be planned for in order to meet that need. For example, the pigs need shelter and the decision is made to build a pig house. There is a lot of planning and learning that comes with this. This is work that allows the potential of the adolescents to develop and learn their capability. Not only do they see the capability in themselves but also in others. This work represents conscious collaborative work to improve, to transform their environment.

Study springs out of the practical work as well as out of an interest of what to study. This is work that allows the adolescents to follow their own individual interest.

Yet another kind of work is that of production, work that offers opportunities for economic but also social independence. Production has to be everyday work. It is a contribution to their community, working toward economic independence and engaging in the wider society.

FREEDOM IN THE THIRD PLANE

Paul Pillai

'The essential reform is this: to put the adolescent on the road to achieving economic independence. We might call it a "school of experience in the elements of social life." (MARIA MONTESSORI, CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE. CLIO 1936, P64)

'Then the children studied but there was complete freedom in their study, and they could apply themselves to anything they liked.' (MARIA MONTESSORI, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION OF THE ADOLESCENT. KODAIKANAL 1942, P93, COMMUNICATIONS 2011)

What do we mean by "freedom"?

We have such a curious range of words and phrases in our Montessori world: "prepared environment", "planes of development" and "normalised child". We can easily lose sight of the fact that these words and phrases have meaning only within the paradigm of "Education as an Aid to Life". Yet, within that paradigm, they are rich in meaning. Each is like a rope attached to a bucket filled with water, drawn from a deep well. One of these words so rich in meaning is "freedom".

Freedom is commonly understood to mean freedom from something. In this sense, freedom exists where there is oppression – real or imagined. Action in the face of oppression – including the unintended oppression of the child by us adults – is vital and pressing. Freedom from oppression is a basic and inalienable right of every human being, and each of us has a responsibility to secure these freedoms for all of us.

Yet there is a kind of freedom that exists without opposition. This freedom is not a reaction to something, but is a constructive force in itself. It is the freedom to follow one's developmental energies.

We believe that freedom is, at its heart, the freedom to work. That is the essential freedom the young person has, and that freedom must be absolute.

Freedom, development, and independence

There are two conditions necessary before this freedom to work can arise. The first condition is a young person who is able to recognise and follow their developmental energies. If this state of being is habitual for the young person, we call it being “normalised”. We need not fear this word. Perhaps we can allow it to represent the idea that it is natural for the human being to act in ways that serve and nourish them; and that behavior that does not serve and nourish the living being is unnatural – even if it is the overwhelming norm.

The second condition is an environment carefully prepared to offer those developmental experiences. Montessori said that one cannot take a plant out of the soil and say it is free – for it, freedom is to be rooted in the soil. Likewise, one cannot release a bird in the desert where there are no trees, and say it is free – for it, freedom requires a tree.

Life can be free only within an environment that allows it to use its instincts or tendencies in order to meet its needs. Those needs are: first to survive, and then to thrive. Each stage of human development has its own needs, and its own means to meet those needs. Freedom for the adolescent is only possible within an environment within which the adolescent can exercise the new powers they have acquired, in order to meet the new needs they experience.

The kind of independences secured in the first and second planes

The work of the child is to become independent of the adult, in a series of different stages that we call planes of development. Each plane of development has a particular kind of independence at its focus.

We prepare environments for children suited to their plane of development. Within these environments, we give them freedom to self-construct. This self-construction takes place through their active experience in the environment we have prepared for them. We call these active experiences their work.

The child in the first plane is a sensorial explorer, and the experiences we offer are sensorial. By offering experiences that meet the nature of the child in that plane, we practice “Education as an Aid to Life”.

Similarly, the child in the second plane is an intellectual explorer, and the experiences we offer are designed to meet the child in this sphere of human activity. The second plane environment is in fact the ideal environment for the development of the intellect at any age, just as

the first plane environment is beautifully suited for exercises in co-ordination no matter what the age.

We know that elderly people suffering from dementia or loss of motor-coordination benefit enormously from the exercises of practical life. Ask your local elderly social care organisation for their client evaluation forms, and marvel at how much of it is about practical independence, and how so many solutions involve the alteration of the physical environment to make that independence possible. The first plane environment is ideal for that practical, functional independence, no matter what the age.

As for the intellect: watch parents at an Elementary parent education evening. They have profound insights about the nature and structure of knowledge. Once, during a Journey & Discovery, two parents who are practicing vets (the animal rather than military kind), and who are passionate about their work and very good at it, were immersed in animal research in the Elementary. It was a striking sight, and evidence that the Elementary is designed to provide both orientation and exercise in the intellectual sphere of human existence – no matter what the age of the human being. It is of course the second plane child who is uniquely gifted with the capacity to make the most of this as they create themselves, but the environment itself is so beautifully suited for knowledge-seekers of any age.

Through active experience in this environment, the second plane child is able to pursue the path of normal development. Of course they are learning so much more in the practical realm – how to organise a backpack for a hike, how to focus the lens of a microscope, or how to clean out the terrarium in which the bearded dragons live. But all of these practical tasks exist not for their own sake, but in order to serve the driving power of the intellect engaged in the uniquely second plane task of exploring the boundaries of the Universe using the mind. The second plane child is the intellectual explorer par excellence.

As this child grows in intellectual independence in the light and warmth of their active experience in the Elementary, they are able to explore new areas of knowledge through the keys we offer them. To support this exploration, we curate objects and experiences for them. Some of these are within the environment, and we call these keys. Our aim is however to help them move out of the environment and into the world. The world they live and move in is imbued with knowledge, and this knowledge forms part of their cultural inheritance. They live, and as they live, they acquire this cultural inheritance in the course of exercising their human tendencies. We support them to become intellectually independent, just as we supported their practical independence as they sought to become a person of their time and place in the first plane.

We observe that by age 12, on the cusp of adolescence, these children are independent learners, and their approach to exploring new areas of knowledge is not dissimilar to ours as adults. Given keys to an area of learning, and access to resources we curate, they are able to conquer that territory by themselves. This is how they arrive at the Erdkinder environment.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The conquest of independence in the third plane is socio-economic

Childhood ends with the second plane, and adolescence is born. This death and rebirth signals the start of the third plane. The child of the third plane, the adolescent, is a socio-economic explorer. Their field of operation is the socio-economic. They perceive the world as being made of people, and being made by people. They step into supranatura as if for the first time. Throughout their childhood they have experienced supranatura as something that exists, that is given, and that they are a part of. Now they experience supranatura as something manmade, and something that they make. This re-orientation from man-the-consumer to man-the-transformer is Copernican, and that revolution takes place in adolescence. They become engaged with the world not just as it is, but as it should be. They step into the role of man as cosmic agent. They stand ready to change the world.

The child dies at puberty, and a new being is formed. This being is a social being. Being born, they are newborn. This is how Montessori describes them – the social embryos, the social newborns, the novices of society. What are they born into? They are born into a new world, a world that did not exist for them previously. They have left behind their old world. They have taken from childhood the gifts of childhood: of adaptation to the culture of their time and place, of the ability to orient in and explore the terrain – physical or intellectual.

The newborn adolescent steps into a new world, which they conceive of as being made up of humanity, and the products of humanity's work. That is, they step out of nature, and into supranatura. This is why the focus shifts from the natural to the cultural. They have entered a new world. They are no longer intellectual explorers in the third plane – just as they were no longer sensorial explorers in the second plane. The adolescent is the socio-economic explorer par excellence.

Each new plane brings with it new tasks. Each new plane brings with it new powers. And each new plane requires a new environment. The adolescent has new powers and new sensitivities, and they require a new environment.

What are these new powers? Montessori says that the sensitive periods the adolescent experiences, of personal dignity and social justice, operate in exactly the same way as sensitive periods such as language did in the first plane.

What is the purpose of these sensitive periods? They exist to help the adolescent fulfill the developmental work he is meant to fulfill in the six years of adolescence: the creation of the social being. This mission, as creative a mission as that of the newly born, involves work the adolescent cannot do before this time, and work he cannot do after this time. There is a window in the life of man during which the social being is formed, and that window is called adolescence.

Montessori's discoveries of the planes of development and the sensitive periods are extraordinary, and must stand at the centre of our understanding of the work of the adolescent. The adolescent is no longer a child. They have left behind the planes of individual development, of childhood, and have entered a new plane, one in which they create the social being.

These social beings represent society in its embryonic form. These social beings represent the possibility of a new society. This commitment to something new, to something different, to something better, is the hope and promise each adolescent brings. Adolescents are a transformative power committed to change. They are the creators of a new humanity. They are the creative energy and the powerful force whose destiny it is to take the whole world in their hands and work it, and mold it, and shape it, and turn it into something that is different from what it is. And the shape that they give it, and the motivation they have to shape it, comes from the sensitivities and special powers that Life gives the adolescent, and through them all humanity, to create the kind of social being who is able to fulfill man's cosmic task of transforming the face of the earth.

They are now working on independence in the socio-economic unit

In the cosmic vision, each part of the cosmos has a role to play in maintaining the harmony of the whole: everything has a "job". The wind has a job, the plant has a job, and the leaf has a job. Everyone does their job as best they can, and the universe continues to evolve. Supranatura too is conceptualized as a harmonious interrelatedness, and Montessori calls this La Nazione Unica – one nation. She observed that whether we realised it or not, all of mankind was one. In the intricate global networks of production and exchange between people around the world she saw evident the oneness of humanity. She observed that the ties of love that bound together the family, had their equivalent in the ties of money that bound together human beings who produced for each other, and exchanged with each other, without even knowing

each other. She saw money as representing human labour, and in equating it with the ties that bind us together as one connected humanity, she gave money a spiritual quality.

Production and exchange: this is the essence of society as she saw it. And this is the framework into which the adolescent steps. The adolescent is engaged with securing their independence in the socio-economic sphere. Developmental work in adolescence takes places in this new sphere: the sphere of society, which the adolescent must experience as, in its essence, linkages based on production and exchange. They produce, through their labour, which is an act of transforming the world through work, an expression of love. And they offer the fruit of their work, which is the fruit of their life, really, to others, who do the same in return. If this offering of one's work to be of use to another is not love, what is? We may lose sight of this. All we may see is the hard-hearted tight-fisted business of grimly exchanging grubby notes. But behind the clenched fist is a human life, and the joys and sorrows of a beating heart that lives consciously or unconsciously in committed service to and utter dependence on other human beings. Each human being, in living and working, is really saying this: "I have poured my life into my work, and I offer it to you as a gift, and all I ask in return is the means to stay alive, so I may continue to serve, and for that I depend on you."

This vision of society conceived of as production and exchange, is what the adolescent steps into. When the adolescents "leave their narrow homes" and go out into the countryside to live and work, and when they share the fruits of their labour with the rest of society, they enter the family of humanity, which is the new family to which they belong. It is moving to see the dignity with which they pass through that archway. Entering into the web of production and exchange gives them a "top of the world" kind of feeling. This community of adolescents who live and work together, and who are involved in acts of production and exchange, naturally and unavoidably create an environment in which they are led to being reliable and accountable – responsible – to each other. They do real work, and the dignity it brings them is beautiful to see. They live the idea of division of labour. They experience for themselves what it means to be reliable.

Real socio-economic responsibility drives responsibility

You may recognise this from your own experience. Here is a recent example from one adolescent community. 150 cucumber plants had arrived, ready to be planted. They had to be planted the day they arrived. Over the next 8-12 weeks the community expects to harvest 2000-2500 cucumbers for sale. All other work stopped that day, and the preparation of the polytunnel for these plants, and their planting, became the focus for the day. There was no avoiding it – it had to be done. At 12pm they paused for lunch. The young people work hard to

make sure lunch is on time each day. Lunch was eaten, and they were quickly back at work: no encouragement was needed, they knew what had to be done.

Adolescents feel keenly responsibilities such as these, and it is vital to them to live up to them. They want to make a contribution. They feel good about themselves when they make a contribution that is valued. They derive a tremendous sense of satisfaction and joy from meeting the needs of others in a genuine way. They grow and blossom through these daily acts of Love. The adult doesn't need to say anything. It is in the setting up of the structure of the day and of community life, that demands are placed on each by the requirements of what is good for the whole. If these demands are felt to be unreasonable, the demands are adjusted through dialogue. If the demands are felt to be reasonable, the young people adjust themselves to it.

And they do. Real work – work that is of value to others and that they come to depend on – drives responsibility and reliability. The young people learn that they have to put meeting those expectations over and above their individual desires or whims; because that is the only way the whole thing works. It is not the idea that a plant will die if not watered – that is a first plane realisation. It is the idea that 'people depend on me', and that 'I am dependable'. This feeling of being indispensable – of being needed - is deeply related to their sense of value. There is a joy they find in being part of a group of young people who are living together, and making their first forays into the adult world, and that joy drives their motivation to pull their weight, and experience directly that together they can do much more than they could alone, and that each person's contribution is necessary and valuable, and integral to the harmony of the whole.

Intellectual freedom and the third plane

What about their intellectual work? Where does freedom come into that? Are we to take seriously Montessori's view that they must have a vacation for 3 years? That they must be free to study what they like? That our responsibility is merely to provide the means?

This is a vital question we feel the need to address head on.

There must be a growth and progression in freedom from plane to plane, or something is not working. We are talking about freedom in its constructive sense. If the Elementary child had less freedom than they did in the Children's House, we would have to question the Elementary environment. Similarly, the scope and nature of freedom during adolescence must be broader and deeper than that experienced in their childhood years. This is not to take away from the new and time-consuming responsibilities that they willingly take on in adolescence.

As you have read, we place those responsibilities front and centre. We see “real work” as the powerful vehicle for transformation that it is.

Yet it is undeniably true that the 12 year old simply does not need intellectual scaffolding in the way they once did. They are independent learners by the time they enter the third plane. They are now able to put to use their intellectual independence to serve their new socio-economic focus, just as they once used their practical independence to serve their intellectual focus.

Adolescents are hungry and thirsty seekers of knowledge. They are hugely political and deeply interested in the world as it is today and what it could be tomorrow. They are fascinated by other people’s minds: discussion and dialogue take on a new momentum. They show a heightened interest in the work of human beings. They see new value in history as explaining and driving the narrative of both present and future. They have new sensitivities, of personal dignity and social justice, and they reveal these sensitivities through what they attend to and what they consider significant. These, together with their lived experience as a community engaged in production and exchange, offer innumerable opportunities for freely-chosen intellectual exploration. Why then would we reduce the freedom they have in intellectual study?

These are some of the questions we put to you:

Should our adolescents be free to study what they are interested in learning about? Does the intellectual work they are doing represent the greater diversity, depth of engagement and individuality that you would expect, given their Elementary experience? Are our adolescents allowed to put to use the intellectual independence they have worked so hard for and won in their Elementary years? Are these young people able to go deep into work that interests them? Do they show a sense of ownership and pride in their work? Is the work they are pursuing genuinely meaningful to them?

Do they have less or more uninterrupted work cycles than they had in the Elementary? Are they given more or less responsibility for their own learning than they had in the Elementary? Is the structure of the programme designed to facilitate, encourage and nurture an atmosphere of curiosity? Are presentations given to individuals and small groups that allow them to open up new areas of learning, develop new skills and hone existing ones? Do we offer access to a curated selection of people, resources and experiences that help them go deeper and broader in their enquiry? Does observation and “following the child” stand at the centre of that process? Do the directions in which their explorations take them routinely surprise us because they are delightfully unexpected and unique?

These questions about freedom and the mind are without regard to the content itself, or the frameworks for content. Our own observation, in dialogue with other adolescent practitioners, is a sufficient guide for both content and methods. National requirements may influence all of this. Some may find that a topic such as 'population sampling' is useful and of interest. Others may find it less relevant to their circumstances. Some may find that a materials-based approach to mathematics works well. Others find a science-based approach works better. We can learn from each other in this way. The more profound questions are these: is developmental work taking place? How can we know? What creates maximum effort? How do we create environments for active experience? It is important to our work that we ask and answer these questions for ourselves.

Why are we insisting on this line of reasoning in an essay about freedom in the third plane? It is because we want to confront directly the academic question, which we hear over and over again. The conversation about adolescence in the Montessori world can at times feel dominated by "curriculum". It is curious that conversations about production and exchange remain on the sidelines, and perhaps symptomatic of our inability to make the transition from the second plane to the third plane. We cannot help but dwell insistently on the intellectual. Dwelling on the intellectual question in the third plane is like dwelling on the sensorial question in the second plane. No one would advocate continuing to focus on the refinement of the visual sense in the second plane. We do not say: well, we had 6 sound boxes in the Children's House, and it was very good that they learned to match these up at a distance, and now they are ready for much more, why don't we have 12 boxes. Or perhaps even 24, with such fine distinctions between them that by the time the child has finished with these (lets call them the Cosmic Sound Boxes), their ears will be trained to such a degree that they will be able to tell the difference between a "p" and a "b" from across a football pitch. After all, Native American children have shown they can hear across vast distances, so let us develop the eardrum to its full potential.

We do not do this. At least, we do not do this with children developing normally: we may of course need to do much additional work to support a child with hearing difficulties, including bringing in specialist support. Generally speaking however, we do not do additional work with the sound boxes in the second plane.

Montessori's own example is of continuing to give exercises in grace and courtesy – how to sit on a chair etc. - to the point where the children acquire the elaborate gestures of courtiers. We do not do that either.

Why then are we obsessed with conversations about curriculum coverage in the third plane? Why do we sweep Montessori's insistence on their need for a 3-year vacation under the

carpet? Why are we unable to step away from conversations about subject knowledge? Perhaps it is because the second plane is an intellectual plane, that it sits very comfortably with us. It fits into the paradigm we have ourselves grown up in. The third plane is where it gets radical, and we who have grown up within a paradigm do not know how to think outside of it. We can only imitate it or rebel against it.

How do we imitate the paradigm? Typically through some variant of project-based learning where we have a practical task (such as building a chicken coop) and load it up with subject knowledge (the biology of chickens, the physics of flight, the history of domestication). “Real work” becomes a Trojan horse.

And how do we rebel against the paradigm? By embracing anachronisms such as the horse and plough, turning away from the promise of technology and seeing only its threat, and rejecting the present to embrace the past.

It is so difficult for us to step outside of the paradigm of education as being linear. It is so difficult for us to truly embrace the idea of “planes of development”. It is a disruptive technology that threatens all that we hold on to. We still haven’t got to grips with it. We feel threatened by it.

We would like to think we have embraced her ideas, but we are still engaged in the act of trying to legitimise Montessori in the eyes of all those in the current paradigm. And since the current paradigm insists on the head being all-important, we try to prove that we can do that too, only better. We fall into the trap of arguing about the paradigm, from within the paradigm. This is what makes Montessori a visionary. She was able to see beyond the paradigm we are trapped in, through an act of genius or of miracle. It is still hard to follow her, because our cultural conditioning is so strong, but we can help each other through discussion and dialogue and the willingness to learn from each other and from the young people we serve.

Do we believe in order to see, or are we waiting to see before we believe?

The role of the adult is to prepare an environment that responds to the developmental energies of the plane, to connect the young people to that environment, and to then pull back to observe. We observe the young person active in their environment. We observe what nourishes them. We observe the obstacles they encounter. And then we alter the environment, because it is the environment we create that matters. We cannot touch the centre of the young person, we can only touch their periphery, and our means for touching this periphery is to provide the possibility of their active experience in their environment. We call that “preparing the environment”.

Just as in the first and second planes, it is for the normalised child that we prepare environments. We do not design the environment around the young person who is not normalised. Of course we meet the young person where they are, but we have to design with the “point of arrival” in mind.

This is perhaps the single most important idea to hold on to in considering the design of the developmental environment for the third plane. We have found it be an inspiring and liberating vision to hold on to the idea of preparing an environment for normalised adolescents. Many questions we at first thought important have dropped away. For instance, when we consider the young people in our care, do we need to worry about whether they will be prepared for University entrance examinations? Of course they will – they are intelligent, motivated, and have considerable experience in tackling new subject areas.

There is grandeur to Montessori’s vision for the adolescent. She saw the vitality and nobility of this age. She saw in the adolescent a hope and promise for mankind. She raises our eyes to a more distant horizon – one in which a world without borders exists, where human beings love each other, and where peace and harmony prevail. This new society is beyond what we can imagine, but Life has given adolescents special powers with which they can create this new world.

Adolescents must have the freedom to create something that is more and better, as only they can. Adolescence is a gift, and that gift can find its full and true expression only in freedom. When we picture in our mind’s eye a normalised 12 year old walking onto the land – with all the gifts they bring from their first and second planes – we can only marvel at the possibilities. How shall we design an environment for this kind of adolescent to be free? It is only in freedom that they can possibly create the New Man – and that has got to be the point of what we do.

Eventually, freedom is something that each young person must claim for themselves. What liberates? Work. Work freely chosen that demands of them all that they have to give is the only thing that can free them. Work is the liberator. Work puts them in touch with their environment and allows them to transform it. In the act of transformation, Love arises within them, and it is this Love that heals and nourishes and liberates. We may say that truly, Love is the only liberator, and that liberation takes place in the only place where liberation is possible: within the human heart.

Our responsibility is to be open to learning through observation

Our wish for you is that you think carefully before you embed a model in your school

– however sophisticated, nuanced, progressive or enlightened it sounds. The only model to embed without fear is that of observation. And if you are lucky, your observation will bring up more questions than answers. All of us who ask these questions are on a shared journey, where what is common to us is not that we have answers, but that we have questions. If you too have these questions– come and join us. Share your questions. We will learn together, and grow together, as we walk this road of freedom together, following the wonder years.

LOCATION // FOCUS ON WHAT IT SHOULD OFFER

Radka Jandová

Life in a peaceful place

"During the difficult period of adolescence it is desirable to have the child live outside his habitual surroundings, outside the family, in the country, in a peaceful place, in the bosom of nature." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 68)

- Being in countryside helps to understand that life is not about individual, not about people but about holistic and complex being of individual within the larger community in the both local and global level.
- Being in the countryside, on the farm, means real work. That is a new element in the prepared environment, practicing the role of adult with the relationship and responsibilities that are adult like.
- Countryside is the ideal place for learning, searching and seeing the interdependencies and interactions between living things (animals, plants) and the role of the individual, the community of people in the rhythm of the life.
- This kind of environment feels of security that the effort and work done would be successful, ideal start to learn before adapting to any environment. On the other hand, individual is adapting to the culture and environment since the birth.

Life in the peaceful place supports:

"The two new needs of the adolescent – to be protected during the delicate physical transition period, and to be placed in position to understand the man's role which he will play in society – cause the emergence of two problems of equal importance regarding education at this age". (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 60)

- Exploring the power of a human within the small environment that must be nurtured to serve the community
- Peace and solitude to process and create
- Place to get rid of the hot-tempered mind and body, calm down, sooth the psyche for those who need it
- Countryside offers larger boundaries, save place to take care of, to find yourself as a

- person and find its own potential within community and how to contribute to the community, first in the local level, later in the global level
- connects to the environment physically and emotionally, knowing the place and caring deeply for it (property as well as community)

Fresh Air, Healthy Food

"Life in the open air, in the sun, a diet rich in vitamins furnished by the nearby fields are the auxiliaries so precious to the body of adolescent..." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 68)

- Fresh air gives feel of real, purity and connects to the nature. As the body is exposed to many changes, both physical and mental, healthy environment can eliminate some health problems.
- Healthy food as the food that is cooked by adolescents from some amount of products that were bred / grown with care, love and understanding of its fundamental needs.

Mindful Reflection and Meditation

"Success depends on self-confidence, on the awareness of one's own talents and of the many possibilities of their adaptation. The awareness of one's usefulness, the feeling that one can help humanity in various way, fill the heart with a noble confidence, with an almost religious dignity. But the feeling of independence that results must be born from the ability to be sufficient to oneself and not from a vague liberty due to benevolent and gratuitous help of adults." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 65)

It takes time to the young individual to valorise the own personality, to be mindful and respectful to the environment and to the other people that are contributing to the community. This process takes time.

The place should offer such environment where the individual and the members of the community can self-express, contemplate, thoroughly think about what they are experiencing inside by both sharing or thinking on its own in the save and creative environment.

Environment should offer:

- The opportunity for self-expression
- The developmental need of adolescent is to find its own personality, to sort of ideas, responses, emotions. The potent mean of this self-expression is the art. Via the art adolescent can express and access easily what is hardly grasped, nameless, emotionally bundled. Thus wide variety of art forms and techniques should be introduced (music incl. singing, visual art including sculpting, dance, drama and acting, recitation and various forms of verbal expression incl. discussion, other handicrafts as weaving or woodwork).
- Opportunity to share
- Every creative piece is meant to be seen, heard, felt. Self-expression via the art help us to understand one another better, sense the feelings, emotions, goodness and beauty one sees in the other. Sharing is essential for human collaboration, social harmony and valuing each other. That is essential step for human understanding and solidarity.
- Opportunity to explore other thoughts
- Lots of music to listen to express the experience of the world, to connect to the childhood and let the childhood go, express emotions
- Many literature and poetry books to link to others emotions, to touch the soul of another
- Wide range of art for inspiration to self-expression
- Drama playing as a practice of living, emotion of others sharing and understanding

Near a City

"A store or sales stand established in the nearby city permits Erdkinder to bring and sell there the products of the fields and gardens together with other products of their labour, and, should the occasion arise, the products of others' labour. (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 70)

More to another wider community / there must be some level of civilisation where adolescents can practice what they have been experiencing on the local level.

There must be opportunity connecting the adolescent place with the other communities, people, real life. Finding way to contribute on the larger level.

Away from the family

"In addition, the rhythm of daily life at college can better harmonize with the demands of study and work, while family life must rather conform to the demands of the life of parents." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 68)

Parents generally tend to be protective over their child, often feel worried about and interfere more than is necessary. Family house gets stability but adolescent needs to move on and comes for stability and family support rather less than more. If not having the opportunity to be away he is more likely torn between old bonds and the new challenge that calls him to go away from what is familiar. Adolescent appreciates challenge, kind of hardship, feel of conquering. When he is away from the family he can with bigger liberation define who he is, what he wants. Moreover, adolescent wants to be very often alone, he seeks solitude that family house doesn't support.

What work does it offer?

"All work is noble. The only ignoble thing is to live without working. It is essential to understand the value of work in all its forms, be they manual or intellectual. Practical experience will cause the adolescent to understand that two forms are complementary, and that they are equally essential in a civilized existence." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 66)

"The work of the soil is the approach to limitless scientific and historical studies... This form of work, then, introduces the children to the heart of social life by experience and study." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 69)

- Feeling of real work contributing to society
- Practising sociability and empathy to others need

"Work in the hotel, the store, and the farm will complete the whole." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 69)

Work that is directly affecting the environment

"A modern farm requiring a number of scientific and manual labours presents the chance to produce, then to exchange, and also enter into direct contact with society through the store

or sales stand." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P.69)

Responsible, meaningful and creative work

"The essential reform therefore consists in putting the adolescent in condition to be able to acquire economic independence... The "independence" has, in addition, a value more educational than practical It is more useful to the psychology of the adolescent than to his material life". (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994, P. 65)

- Valuing inner personality and the others involved in the work in a respectful way
- Side by side work with the adult

Minimum points for location:

- Environment where adolescent can practice the role of adult with the relationship and responsibilities that are adult like
- Environment that provides opportunity for social experience
- Safe environment offering peace and solitude to process and create
- Environment to which the adolescent is attached and affects it
- Environment that gives the opportunity for self-expression and sharing

QUALIFICATION → PHILOSOPHICAL

Radka Jandová

"My vision of the future is no longer of people taking exams and proceeding on that certification from the secondary school to the university, but of individuals passing from one stage of independence to a higher, by means of their own activity through their own effort of will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, PIERSON, 1994)

"You cannot have effort without interest and purpose. There is no interest if the intelligence does not cooperate. The person must be interested. If the person is not unified, he will not be interested. So we must have interest first and then work with an intelligent purpose, work which is freely chosen by the individual." (MONTESSORI, MARIA: MOVEMENT AND CHARACTER LECTURE, LONDON, 1946)

Examination of the Conscience

The young personality recognizes

- his personal responsibility,
- his ability,
- his human potential,
- inner values of others,
- his value and usefulness in the human community.

He is passionate and detached about what he is doing, has the sense of usefulness and highly creative thinking, ready to adapt to or change the world.

Preparation for the Exams / University

The exams are formal validation of the knowledge the young personality has acquired over the years for the culture he is living in. As he is very passionate about what he is doing, preparation for the exams or university entrance exams is just incidental step for the young adult to reach more information and knowledge to cultivate his personal mission.

ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Saša Lapter

From the earliest times on, humans have changed their environment in order to better fulfil their needs. This constant improvement of the environment - the progress of humanity - is neither good nor bad in itself. It can lead to a better life for all, but it can, as we meanwhile know, also lead to the destruction of our natural and social habitat. Montessori pedagogy is concerned about how we can prepare next generations to use their great powers to change the environment in such a way that it will lead to a world of peace.

Montessori approach is a holistic approach, meaning both that cognitive, social, moral, emotional, physical and spiritual development are all considered, and that in a Montessori developmental environment those components are never addressed separately but as a part of an integrated experience.

The developmental goal of the adolescence is the social/economic independence¹. In order to facilitate social development appropriate for adolescence, the Erdkinder environment should provide a number of distinct features. Those are:

- The social group of the residential Erdkinder environment
- Dedicated elements of social organization (shop, guesthouse, work on land)
- The human society at large

All this taken together should not be regarded as optional or temporary features, but should be provided as a full-time part of the Erdkinder environment. The rationale for this requirement is that only a full-time environment will provide:

- appropriate opportunities for maximum effort
- possibilities for repetition
- enough time for the wealth of experiences
- enough experiences to lead to valorisation
- opportunities to live what they have until their adolescence just learned

1 The essential reform therefore consists in putting the adolescent in condition to be able to acquire economic independence. It concerns the establishment of an "experimental school of social life".
Montessori, Maria. From childhood to adolescence. 1st ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1973. p 102

Social development in the third plane

There is a specific kind of social development unique to each plane of development. In the first plane, there is the society by cohesion. In the second plane, the social development is shaped within a group directed by a leader². With the third plane, another form (level) of social development is taking place³: organized work for production and exchange.

Residential Erdkinder environment

Maria Montessori envisioned full boarding as a central feature of the Erdkinder environment⁴.

Both for the advantages of the land life (healthy environment, possibilities for contemplation) and in order to provide opportunities for the work on land, the Erdkinder environment is located in the countryside; furthermore, the time needed to experience all the developmental aspects of an Erdkinder environment requires much more time on site than it is usual (or even possible) in the traditional schools; so the residential aspect is certainly here for practical reasons.

But only when we think of the social development of the adolescent, we learn to fully appreciate the importance of the residential component. Only when young people are not only

2 When a child is 7 years old or more another kind of social organization [than society by cohesion] begins. This organization is an external one with a leader who directs it.
Montessori, Maria. *The Child, Society and the World: Unpublished Speeches and Writings*. The Montessori Series. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2008. p 27

When a piece of cloth is to be woven the web is prepared first. All the threads lie close together but parallel to each other. This is like the society by cohesion. They are all fixed at one point but they do not intermingle. The second stage is when the shuttle attaches all the threads together. This is like the work of the leader who attaches all the people together but it is necessary to have the web, the society by cohesion, as a basis or we could not weave a strong piece of cloth.

Montessori, Maria. *The Child, Society and the World: Unpublished Speeches and Writings*. The Montessori Series. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2008. p 27

3 At puberty another form of intercourse arises, a new kind of social instinct: society is conceived of as work. New real work, work of absorbing interest, work that is worth the effort it costs us is not in the main creative, hence not individual; it requires the collaboration of others, and this cooperation implies association and discipline. This shows how economic independence, such as is realized by disciplined association for carrying on work, is itself the foundation, the moral cornerstone of studying at higher level.
Montessori, Maria. „Principles and Practice in Education: First Lecture, Institute of Medical Psychology, London, 10 November 1936.“ AMI Communications 1-2 (2011): 50–60. p 59-60

4 My plan, therefore, in a few words is that secondary education should be given in residential schools. These would be to a certain extent self-supporting, and would combine the advantages of the Sanatorium, Polytechnic, University and a religious community.
Montessori, Maria. „The Reform of Secondary Education.“ AMI Communications 1-2 (2011): 79–86. p 85

being together for the duration of the school hours, but living together on a full-time basis, the social community beneficial (and, in fact, necessary) for the development of the adolescent can come into being. The real-life necessity of doing work for the benefit of the community, different practical and social challenges of community life, distinct aspects of social interaction existent in a community not only learning and working, but also living together, possibilities (and necessities) of building long-term, permanent relationships, the necessity for the adolescent to separate from hers or his own family⁵ and the group supporting this transition from the family one belongs to to the family one will start one day (rite of passage), all of this can only be found within a boarding community working along the Montessori principles.

Elements of Social Organization

Besides the residential component of the Erdkinder environment, Maria Montessori postulated three other elements for the social organization of the Erdkinder environment that she deemed necessary for the social development of the adolescent.

These elements are:

- shop
- hotel
- work on land

Each of these elements has its distinct role in providing unique and specific developmental experiences; so all of them are necessary for the social development of the adolescent.

Those developmental experiences have as their ultimate end the preparation of the adolescent for his future role in the human society - to give his unique contribution in the progress of civilization towards the world of peace.

An important part of this preparation is also the contemplation of positive and negative effects of tools and technology, by accessing the social and moral impact of inventions and discoveries in the course of human history, through a feature of the Erdkinder environment called the Museum of Machinery.

5 [...] I am out to proclaim that it is essential for the child at puberty to be separated from his own family; that it is necessary for him to undertake some such occupation as work upon the land; that he should begin to know by experience how to earn his own living. This is no mere plan of study; it is the foundation upon which to build up a curriculum aiming at the development of personality. Montessori, Maria. „Principles and Practice in Education: First Lecture, Institute of Medical Psychology, London, 10 November 1936.“ AMI Communications 1-2 (2011): 50–60. p 59

Shop

The shop or the store is the social centre of an Erdkinder environment, facilitating the social exchange between the adolescents and the society at large. Crucial for the shop to fulfil its social function is that the exchange of goods is seen as a part of social exchange, and that contact with the society is deemed as important as the economic activity taking place.

By working in the shop, adolescents experience social work, can utilize personal expression, take part in the social exchange, and involve in commerce and exchange.

Hotel

The task of running a hotel might seem outside the reach of the adolescent; but Maria Montessori draw her confidence that the adolescents can succeed, and succeed magnificently, by looking back at the competencies and independencies they were able to gain from their earliest childhood in appropriate Montessori schools.

The specific developmental experiences provided through the running of a hotel are large scale social group and extra-familial experience, self-care including nutrition, social life, reflection and meditation, finance, maintenance, organizing for comfort and order, good taste and domestic proficiency.

Work on Land

While an Erdkinder environment shouldn't be mistaken for a residential school with an associated farm or vegetable garden, still the work on the land is a crucial component of an Erdkinder environment. While the adolescents are discovering about the supranature and the cosmic mission of the humans to build and develop it, there is much to be learned from the work on land, on of the first interventions of humans into the nature and the pre-requisite for the transition from nomadic to settled lifestyle.

To explain the connection between adolescent and the work on the land, Maria Montessori compared the younger child with the nomad, just absorbing, but not producing any culture, and the adolescent with the settler, who learns how to contribute in the human mission of creating the culture. Thus not the natural, but the supranatural aspects of the work on land are the domain of the Erdkinder - learning and understanding the most modern practices and methods - together with the associated science - of the agriculture.

Work of the land provides specific developmental experiences like contact with nature, understanding of origins of culture and life of man, and finally understanding human effort in the cultivating the soil as a part of the overall human improvement of the natural environment, the supranature.

Interactions with the society at large

Full valorisation of the adolescent can be achieved only through the interaction with the society at large. It should be noted that even the elements of the social organization, listed above, are not necessarily started or operated by the Erdkinder community, but can also be adequate commercially operated establishments in the neighbourhood (Maria Montessori even contemplated involving parents in starting and operating these enterprises).

In the adolescence, it is work for wage that provides the major contribution to the valorisation; and while earning the money in the school-operated enterprise is certainly a valid contribution, by working for wage outside the school there is a valorisation in a real-life situation.

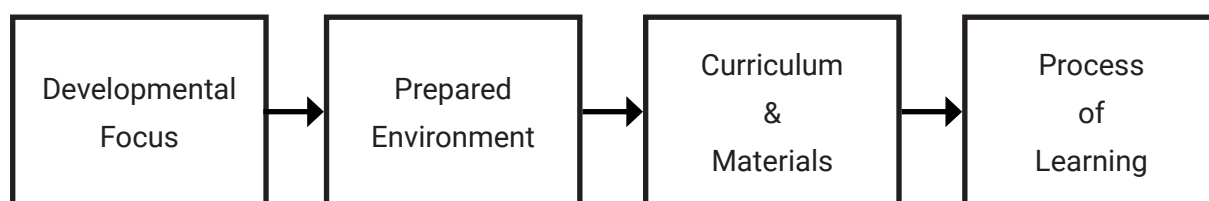
STUDY AND WORK PLANS

Paul Pillai

Montessori has drawn up the outline of a study and work plan in the Appendices.

What can we add to this plan that would be helpful?

Approaching the topic in the following way may help us see both wood and trees:



1/ DEVELOPMENTAL PURPOSE

Development is an ever-increasing conquest of independence.

"Development takes the form of a drive toward an ever greater independence". (ABSORBENT MIND, P83)

"Freedom to carry out a certain action upon a certain object at any given time - mere freedom to handle it without interference from the adult - this cannot aid human personality in its development... At the base of all these activities, there must be a gradual conquest - a gradual gaining of independence... It implies the acquiring of a sense of the power to act alone; the possibility of carrying out some useful and important action without help from others; the being able to solve one's problems for oneself, to reach a difficult goal by one's own efforts." (PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE (1936), COMMUNICATIONS 2011 P58)

The type of independence changes with the plane.

"Scholastic material enabling him to acquire knowledge is no longer all that his hands require... It is now essential that his hands should be provided with real work. I mean, such

work as implies responsibility. Above all, it is essential that he should experience the feeling of being able to live his own life and shift for himself. For upon this basis along is the growth of personality made possible and, at the same time, progress in learning rendered efficient.”
(PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE, P59)

In the third plane the developmental focus shifts from the intellectual to the socio-economic.

2/ PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

The prepared environment has to change accordingly. It is no longer an academic environment, but a socio-economic environment.

“The essential reform is this: to put the adolescent on the road to achieving economic independence. We might call it a ‘school of experience in the elements of social life’.” (CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE CLIO, P64)

The prepared environment is designed to allow the adolescents to work collaboratively and individually on:

- Meeting the needs of the community (What needs doing?)
- Meeting one’s own needs and interests (To what am I drawn?)

There is a constant and valuable tension between freedom and responsibility, between what I want to do, and what needs doing. This negotiation between self and community is where development happens.

3/ CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS

The curriculum is derived from these two aspects: “What needs doing?” and “To what am I drawn?”

Aspect 1: What needs doing?

What needs The socio-economic entity (“community”) and all that it needs – from office facilities to bank accounts to toolsheds and greenhouses - is the primary material for the third plane in so far as the “What needs doing?” question is concerned.

"Therefore the work on the land is an introduction both to nature and to civilization." REFORM, P81 .

"This shows how economic independence, such as is realised by disciplined association for carrying in work, is itself the foundation, the moral cornerstone of studying at a higher level. In such study, scientific knowledge will develop in connection with social experience at its centre; the pivot upon which knowledge turns being the actual worth and capacity of the independent individual." (PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE, P60)

"...put to practical use their knowledge of science... vegetable manure is now made scientifically... application of electricity to agriculture, and that vitamins are kept, in a wet or fresh state by means of electricity! " (KODAIKANAL, P92)

"No greater motive power can be found for interesting the learner in the time he lives in and in the past ages of human history." (PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE, P60)

"The shop would be in respect to the studies of economics and politics, and educational object, similar to the aquarium in the study of biology". (REFORM, P82)

Thus one aspect of study proceeds from the needs of this socio-economic entity.

Aspect 2: What am I drawn to?

The materials for the "What am I drawn to?" question leads to theatre props and paint brushes, to historical artifacts, to machines for physics and to hands-on materials for mathematics. Anything that can be usefully materialised, should.

"...the chance to handle, while one thinks, a material representation of the thing thought of, some object which can accompany the process of reasoning... The machines in physics, the reactions in chemistry, or the living beings in biology are all suitable aids..." (PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE, P56)

"The school should possess a museum of machines which are of suitable size so that the children can take them down and re-assemble them, also use and repair them." (THE REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION 1939, COMMUNICATIONS 2011, P85)

"The available material should include a library of books on the subject, geographical atlases, and a history museum containing pictures, portraits, reproductions of historical documents and prehistoric objects. " (CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE CLIO, P78)

The second aspect of study proceeds from the interests of the adolescent. Montessori offers a representative list of topics to be offered.

"This includes the study of the earth and the living things, that is geography, biology etc. It includes also the study of human progress and the building up of civilization in connection with physics, chemistry, mechanics and engineering. " (THE REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION 1939, COMMUNICATIONS 2011, P85)

"This instruction must be scientifically correct and must be related to every day simple facts so that it can always be tested and confirmed by observation and experiment. " (THE REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION 1939, COMMUNICATIONS 2011, P85)

"The study of the history of mankind... should be treated as far as possible as a complete whole, from which special periods can be chosen for individual study. The available material should include a library of books on the subject, geographical atlases, and a history museum containing pictures, portraits, reproductions of historical documents and prehistoric objects. " (CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE CLIO, P78)

"In every subject the syllabus must be planned not only to give a thorough knowledge of the groundwork but to build up on this and to include the latest and best result of modern research and thought." (THE REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION 1939, COMMUNICATIONS 2011, P85)

Other topics may be added, keeping in mind two considerations:

- The adolescent's desire to participate in society, to step into their future; and the topics required for examinations they will sit; and
- Our goal to aid the unfolding life of each adolescent, and her exhortation that the adolescents are "completely free to study what they like and the means to do so are given to them." (Kodaikanal, p 93).

"A scheme, written in large letters, posted in an obvious position, clearly indicating the degree of study demanded by the laws governing secondary education, constitutes an excellent stimulant and gives the directives but not the obligations." (FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, SCHOCKEN 1973, P123)

"Furthermore, it is necessary to let those who wish to work have the opportunity to attain – or even to surpass – the level required by official regulation" (FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, SCHOCKEN 1973, P123)

"The school of the Erdkind covers all the period of puberty, up to eighteen years. During the last two years it is necessary to assist the pupils in preparing for the university or to pass the examinations required to obtain diplomas." (FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, SCHOCKEN 1973, P124)

"So these children not only adapt themselves to the soil, but the life of these different peoples and their needs are illustrated and taught them by the lectures they receive." (KODAIKANAL, P94)

"Very good lectures on different subjects were given to the children, which would help them to get a true vision of the world.. So this was a school where the child's thoughts were uplifted by these lectures, and the child was made to realise the cosmic plan and also the application of science." (KODAIKANAL, P93)

There are thus two motivations to study: the first being to fulfill the needs of the community and the second, to meet the interests of the self.

4/ PROCESS OF LEARNING

Independent learners

The second plane is the intellectual plane. At the end of the second plane the 12 year old, who has received the gift of Cosmic Education, is a "learner for life". They have acquired both a framework for knowledge, and the mindset of the independent learner. They bring this to their rebirth as social newborns.

We know this from experience with the second plane.

The freedom to pursue one's intellectual and artistic interests, a freedom they have enjoyed through their second plane, continues to exist when they enter the third plane. The diversity of study taking place would ideally reflect the diversity of the human beings we are serving.

First period

The first period can be offered in any number of ways. It could one-to-one, or in small groups or the whole group. It could be on-site or off-site. It could be on the land or at sea. It

could be in a forest or a factory. It could be with a specialist or a generalist. It could be with an in-house member of staff, or an external expert. It could be face to face, or via a massive online open course. It could be a monologue or a seminar. It may use a physical material or it may be electronic, or paper; or just words or images or sounds. [Some examples can be offered].

"The best methods are those that arouse maximum interest in the student, that give him the opportunity to work alone, to experiment by himself, and that permit him to alternate his studies with the practical life." (FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, SCHOCKEN 1973, P123)

Second period

There must be opportunity for a (substantial) second period that involves the active work of the adolescents, in some cases supported by the adults. Not every first period will lead to a second period: this is a description of the process of learning, rather than a prescription of the process of teaching. Again, the form of the second period cannot be prescribed: the only guideline can be that the motivation is internal, that the adolescent is active (using their head, heart and hands), and that their work opens up the possibility for more and more work. "Going-out", which began in the Elementary, need not stop.

"Visits are organised and the children are taken to different groups of workers, factory men, etc., and they live with them and help them with their work, and thus they realise the mentality and the psychology of these men. They go and help the fisherman and stay out in the boats during the night, and sometimes for weeks. Others go to farms, either to poor farms or to the well-organised ones and help there. " (KODAIKANAL, P93)

"There comes a time when we must say 'Human beings must be free. Go forth! Explore the world!'" (TWENTY-EIGHTH LECTURE, AMSTERDAM 1938, NAMTA VOL 26/3, 2001, P207)

Third period

The third period is primarily reflected in the independent transformation of their socio-economic reality. This could be through the earning or saving of money, through the physical transformation of their environment, or a transformation of their internal landscape – a changed attitude, a new relationship with their world.

"These and other similar ideas which will awaken a realisation of the power of man and the greatness of civilization should be presented in a form that will stir genuine emotion, for feelings of this kind should exist with the feeling of patriotism and religion." (THE REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION 1939, COMMUNICATIONS 2011, P85)

"At this time the human soul by nature opens itself to love. His conscience becomes sensible to the greatness of man and to civilization based on the great conquests which were made possible by human cooperation. He feels drawn to find a great aim in life, to prove himself by assuming a responsibility and he feels united with the rest of mankind by idealistic feelings."
(LA ISTITUZIONE DEGLI ERDKINDER, C. 1934, COMMUNICATIONS 2011, P64)

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS – THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

Saša Lapter

Similar to Montessori prepared environments for other age groups, the role of the adult in the Erdkinder adolescent community is to be the dynamic link between the adolescent and the environment⁶ that will allow the adolescent to get the most of the environment for hers or his development.

In order to understand the role of the adult in a prepared environment for the third plane of development, therefore, we must look at the psychological characteristics of the adolescent, and especially the specific developmental focus of the plane. Then, we must see how the adults can provide for those characteristics to facilitate the optimum development of the adolescent.

- Protect the adolescent and place it into position to understand man's role in society⁷
- Develop social (and economic) independence⁸
- Foster intellectual independence

6 [Teacher] is the main connecting link between the material, that is, the objects, and the child. Montessori, Maria. *The Discovery of the Child. The Montessori Series.* Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2007. p 151

There is a direct interchange between the child and his environment while the teacher with his offerings of motives of interest and his initiations constitutes primarily a link, a trait d'union between them. Montessori, Maria. *The Formation of Man.* Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2009. p 39

7 The two new needs of the adolescent-to be protected during the delicate physical transition period, and to be placed in a position to understand the man's role which he will play in society – cause the emergence of two problems of equal importance regarding education at this age. Montessori, Maria. *From childhood to adolescence.* 1st ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1973. p 97

8 Independence on another level is required at this age [of adolescence], for independence is necessary in social life as well. Young people must perform social functions independently, work, and earn a living. Montessori, Maria. *Education and Peace.* Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2008. p 109f

[...] our assertion [is] that productive work which assures the economic independence of the adolescent or, more exactly, which brings him to the first notion of that independence can advantageously become a general principle for his social education. Montessori, Maria. *From childhood to adolescence.* 1st ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1973. p 104

Build a protective environment for the adolescent

Adolescence is an age of turmoil, insecurity and anxiety. Unless the prepared environment - and especially the adults in the prepared environment - can provide a feeling of safety and security, the very foundation on which all development is footed will be missing.

Some of the features of a safe and secure environment for the adolescent include: at least partially familiar social group (adolescents and adults), land based residential physical environment, opportunities to use the already gained functional, intellectual and moral independence and a general feeling of continuity across the planes of the development.

In order to contribute to the feeling of safety and security of the Erdkinder environment, the adult should:

- Be familiar with the developmental characteristics of the adolescent and the prepared environment designed with those characteristics in mind
- Be personally familiar with the adolescents, ideally witnessing their development in the previous planes of development
- Help the adolescent to understand man's role in society
- Support the adolescent in the development of the economic independence
- Provide opportunities to use the already gained functional, intellectual and moral independence

Quotes

"Independence on another level is required at this age [of adolescence], for independence is necessary in social life as well. Young people must perform social functions independently, work, and earn a living. Society must furnish a special environment in which young people can earn their livelihood. They must have this opportunity because they will one day have to help build supnature. They must therefore be given the chance to spend time studying and practising manual and intellectual skills." (MONTESSORI, MARIA. EDUCATION AND PEACE. AMSTERDAM: MONTESSORI-PIERSON PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2008. P 109F)

"Until adolescence the child was drawn by nature to the acquirement of his own individuality, but he now enters a psychological period directed towards society. Culture must, therefore, give him the means which allow him a social orientation, by making him understand how the world he lives in functions; the correlation between groups of people through their work; the

balance and abundance which occur through exchange; the different functions of each kind of work for the maintenance and progress of human civilization, and the contribution of every individual.” (MONTESSORI, MARIA. „LA ISTITUZIONE DEGLI ERDKINDER.” AMI COMMUNICATIONS 1-2, 2011: 61–66. P 62)

“The essential reform therefore consists in putting the adolescent in condition to be able to acquire economic independence. It concerns the establishment of an “experimental school of social life”. (MONTESSORI, MARIA. FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE. 1ST ED. NEW YORK: SCHOCKEN BOOKS, 1973. P 102)

TO WHAT END? – A UNITED HUMANITY

Jenny Höglund

"If we wish to bring to the children knowledge of the real and material world, nothing can be more significant and accurate than the image of the tree that is human solidarity, rooted in a distant past and extending its branches towards eternity, while we live the infinitesimal second allotted to human life." (MARIA MONTESSORI)

We know that Montessori's goal with education is to aid life so that each child may develop according to his or her full potential into a fully functioning independent adult.

"Their [the small children'] development into independent and mature personalities depends on their further education. It is a mistake to think that this development will happen on its own accord, or that personality traits considered necessary for well-adjusted behaviour within a community come into being only during adolescence. A long and indirect process of preparation is necessary before these traits become manifest. Personal experiences during childhood determine the role they play in the mature personality, as well as how they are expressed." (MARIA MONTESSORI)

Therefore the children's work is for their development. The developmental task of the adolescent is to participate in the workings of society, learning to do adult work. These experiences need to be concrete and not abstract. Adaptability is a quality that is important. Young people of today need to be prepared for changes in society, but also for possibilities. Therefore education should not be restricted to specialization and training for specific jobs, but aim for a many-sided development and adaptability. They should also at this time of life have a higher level of moral conscience and accept the responsibility attached to their lives, a responsibility that comes with being members, not only of society but also of our planetary home.

"My vision of the future is no longer of people taking exams and proceeding on that certification from the secondary school to the university, but of individuals passing from one stage of independence to a higher, by means of their own activity, through their own effort of will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual." (MARIA MONTESSORI)

Our context is not the school neither is it a curriculum. Our context is a social one. We educate in the context for community, for human solidarity. We do not just offer a social

setting with a community of objects, but a community of subjects where everyone has the opportunity and responsibility to contribute. When we know we are members of a community it will impact on how we function.

"Our task as educators is to ensure that an intense consciousness of universal solidarity will flourish within our children." (MARIA MONTESSORI)

The whole point according to Montessori is to make people aware that humanity is born as a single nation; no one can anymore live in an isolated way. We are one single nation, but we continue to live our lives as if we all were different and had very little in common.

The single nation has opened the whole world and brought all men together. The earth's riches now belong to all. The fear of poverty must disappear, but once free of this fear man must realize that riches must no longer be sought within or on the surface of the earth. The single treasure of man, the raw material that promises to yield man everything, is human intelligence, an inexhaustible treasure.

"...What is therefore needed today is an education that will lead the human personality to recognize man's grandeur." (MARIA MONTESSORI)

Humanity is a whole and there are bonds that reach back into the past and stretches out into the future. There are consequences for the future because of our actions. There is the idea of unity, but unity through differences that serve the whole. We are one single nation and this understanding, because of the bonds that are there between us and what we share and how we depend on each other.

Human beings are powerful, where is this power taking us? How do we move in a direction towards human solidarity and a social responsibility? How do we support students to arrive at university formed with the responsibility of a social destiny?

We must be "endeavouring to influence men's consciousness by giving them new ideals, fighting indifference and incomprehension; to awaken in man's spirit a sense of gratitude towards other men. This should also be done with children. In fact, these endeavours should begin with the children, giving them the opportunity to reflect on the social value of work, on the beauty of labour carried out by the others, whereby the common effort enriches the life of all".

Humans continue to transform the Earth, continues creation and the approach taken is to allow the students to become individual agents for creation and not for destruction.

"This is the hope we have – a hope in a new humanity that will come from this new education, an education that is a collaboration of man and the universe, that is a help for evolution, for the incarnation of man." (MARIA MONTESSORI)

Everyone has his/her own work to carry out and in this he/her cannot be replaced nor can these moments in life be repeated.

Each situation in life represents a challenge that needs to be responded to in a responsible way. Montessori means that this is in the hands of the schools and the educators.

AUTHORS



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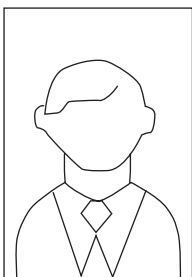
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Vikki Taylor has been involved with Montessori Education for over 20 years, working with both children and adults. She has recently completed the AMI Training of Trainers programme and is on the faculty at the Maria Montessori Institute, London. She also co-directs the AMI 3-6 Diploma Course in Tanzania.



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Saša Lapter studied physics in Zagreb and Vienna and worked for years as a business consultant before discovering Montessori pedagogy and becoming full-time Montessori school principal, administrator and teacher. Saša holds an AMI Montessori Teacher for Children from 6 - 12 Years of Age diploma and a certificate from AMI Montessori Orientation Programme to Adolescent Studies (12-18). He co-founded „Montessori-Schule Wien 1 im Heiligenkreuzerhof“ (for children age 6-12), located in the historical centre of Vienna, and „Montessori-Schule Prein an der Rax“ (for adolescents) in the easternmost foothills of the Alps, an hour's drive south of Vienna.



Paul Pillai

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