



Lectures about Montessori education

"Education for Life: How Montessori Education Fosters Neurological Capabilities Necessary for Survival of Children from All Backgrounds and May Even Promote the Survival of All Life on Planet Earth."

The Montessori approach is often described as "education for life," and while most understand this expression to mean that Montessori provides the skills necessary for success in school, work, and relationships, a meaningful case can be made that Montessori provides experiences that—at the deepest level—facilitate the development of neurological capabilities that are essential for the survival of any organism, and uniquely promotes a kind of conscious, system-thinking-based awareness necessary for preserving all life on Earth. If you have ever wondered about the relevance of practical life in the modern age, or questioned the basic purpose of the sensorial materials, this lecture will be a revelation, and may change the way you think about human development.

"Impossible Without Me:" Values, Morality, and Social Development in the Montessori Adolescent Community.

As Montessori showed us, the conditions necessary to meet the challenges of a growing mind (and body) require distinctly different conditions across the planes of development. In the first plane, the child constructs an advanced "central processor" through distinctly cognitive-developmental experiences. During the second plane, his or her mind learns to solve more complex problems and engage in further self-guided discovery of the wider world around them. The Montessori child entering an adolescent community has an entirely new set of emotional, social (and continuing cognitive!) tasks ahead. This lectures reviews the developmental tasks of adolescence, and shows how the Montessori adolescent community both continues and expands the work done in earlier planes, as he or she refines core values and unique contribution to the world (Plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A).

The Benefits of a Montessori Education

Why consider Montessori education for your child? Perhaps you visited a Montessori classroom and it felt "right" for your family, but did you know that the Montessori method has also been shown to maximize the development of critical parts of the brain? Come learn how Montessori builds better brains and how your decision to send your child to a Montessori school might just lay the foundation for happiness and success--in school and for the rest of your child's life. (Plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A).

Executive Functions and Practical Life: A Foundation for Building Better Brains

This workshop provides an introduction to the set of cognitive capabilities known in the scientific literature as "executive functions," and shows how Montessori education in general--and Practical Life activities in particular--provide an unparalleled "laboratory" for young children to explore and form these essential cognitive abilities. Montessorians know that there is far more to Practical Life than care for self and the environment, but did you know that Practical Life activities could make the difference between a later diagnosis of ADHD for some children? That Practical Life is an essential foundation for Normalization in the children's house? The seeds of self-control begin in learning to control one's own body. Learn how Practical Life is the first step for each child in building a foundation for a better brain, in the Montessori environment and beyond (This is a professional development workshop that is three hours in length, presented with AMI 3-6 Trainer Elina Rautasalo).

Building Better Brains: How School and Home Life Can Build Higher-Order Cognitive Ability in Children (but generally don't)

The brain is an amazingly malleable organ, and while every child's brain is unique, there are general principles that can help every developing brain attain its highest developmental potential. The way we parent, and the way we organize "school" can have a profound impact on cognitive developmental outcomes. Every parent wants his or her child to reach her highest potential, so what approaches to parenting are the most effective? Every teacher wants to support the growth and development of his or her students, so what kind of school activities will lead to the strongest developmental outcomes? The answers to these questions are clearer now than they ever have been, yet, in nearly all areas of life, we generally fail to provide the environmental experiences that we know will yield the best outcomes. How should we parent? What should we do at school? Do parents and teachers need to get: a) Tougher, b) Softer, or, c) None of the above? The answers to these and related questions might surprise you, and they may also help you make a difference in the life a child (Plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A).

Getting Education Reform Out of the Box

In the United States and around the world, calls for education reform continue to come from parents, students, teachers and policy makers. Yet, with decades of policy changes designed to improve school performance, real, substantive progress in education continues to elude us (and we may be going backwards in some important areas). Far too many children fail to learn basic skills, even in the face of shifting curriculum priorities. Efforts to improve outcomes have included smaller class size, extending the school day (or year) and new methods of content delivery. Yet, who among us will really be surprised when, in ten years time, we find that tablets or computers haven't solved education's many problems? How we do "school" must change radically for children to thrive in this century.

The basic assumptions of our current education framework need to be reexamined, because the framework itself maybe the problem. In this lecture, Dr. Steve Hughes, director of the Center for Research on Developmental Education, examines the basic assumptions of the standard model of education, and shows how an entirely different framework--first articulated by Dr. Maria Montessori over a hundred years ago--conforms to what we now know about optimizing social, emotional, cognitive development, and academic development. It's an entirely different framework, and it's an effective one. And it's where education must look for real answers to the crisis in education.

Igniting the Flame Within: Montessori Education and the Development of the Self

Beginning as a tiny spark in infancy, the light that shines within a child will, over time, grow to become a steady, strong flame IF he or she experiences an environment that recognizes, respects, and fuels that inner light. What are the requisite features of such an environment? What makes Montessori education so effective in "fueling the flame" of each child's unique identity? Part of Dr. Montessori's genius was her understanding that human development requires different experiences at different stages of development. Working from the set of cognitive capabilities known as "executive functions," Dr. Hughes shows how unique features of each of the first three planes refine and support the creation of essential cognitive capabilities that help produce curious, creative, moral, inspired, and inspiring adults; persons in whom the light of identity burns bright and warm (Plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A. This lecture shares some content with 'School 2.0').

School 2.0: The Neurological Case for Montessori Education

In this highly visual and entertaining talk, you will learn why Montessori education provides an enriched environment supporting formation of the academic, social, and problem-solving skills that now, more than ever, are critical for lifetime success. Over a hundred years ago, Dr. Maria Montessori anticipated most of what we know about the conditions necessary for optimal human brain development, and began producing remarkable results among children from all backgrounds. This lecture gives the brain development reasons that the hands-on, activity-oriented, problem-solving, and collaborative learning communities found in Montessori schools are producing collaborative, adaptive, leaders ready for the unique challenges of the 21st century (plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A. This lecture shares considerable content with "Getting Education Reform Out of the Box" and also overlaps with 'Igniting the Flame).

Modern Parenting: Tips, Tricks, and Traps

This lecture examines the history and consequences of current trends in parenting behavior. We all want our children to be happy, successful, and to possess good self-esteem. What are the best ways to achieve these goals? What should parents do? What are some common errors parents make? Are parents these days erring on the side of being too strict--or too permissive?

What do we know about what works (and when is it okay to say “no” to my toddler?). With the experience born of over 15 years of clinical practice, Learn about the growth of the self-esteem movement and see some of the surprising (and relieving) results of research examining best parenting practices (plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A).

Prove it: Simple Scientific Methods to Validate Montessori Education in Your Community

For the Montessori movement to gain ground, it will be necessary to do more than just repeat the same old assertions. You know what you have to offer, but skeptics and policy makers will only be convinced by hard data. Dr. Montessori was a brilliant scientist, and scientific methods are a part of the legacy that all Montessorians can rightfully claim. So what kind of scientific methods can you use to show how your school is benefiting children? The principles of good educational program evaluation are straightforward and well within the capabilities of any Montessori school administrator. The tools you need are out there. In this presentation, Dr. Steve Hughes describes a number of different approaches and assessment instruments that you can start using right now to help demonstrate--with hard data--the value of your work (this is a professional development workshop and can be presented as either a two or three hour event).

Why Movement (but not all movement!) Is Essential In Developmental Education

Montessori teachers understand the profound importance of movement for human development. Yet, there are some misconceptions, bad ideas and myths that impact Montessori thinking and practice. There is a good deal of scientific research about the role that movement plays in cognitive development, and understanding this work can improve Montessori practice. This workshop reviews key neuroscience research addressing how movement (but not all movement!) is essential in stimulating brain and cognitive development (designed for Montessori audiences; running time about 2.5 - 3 hours, including time for Q&A).

Life, the Universe and Everything: Montessori Education in the Elementary Years

Your child loves his or her Montessori preschool, and you are probably now congratulating yourself on having chosen well, even if a little blindly. In the Montessori early learning environment, your child has built a great foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement. As your child matures out of the period that Montessori described as “the absorbent mind,” and into the period of “the reasoning mind,” are you wondering what lies ahead? The Montessori elementary environment challenges the children’s developing cognitive skills and fosters collaboration, debate, problem-solving, creativity, and exploration of the interdependent systems that comprise our world. Come learn how Montessori in the elementary years supports academic, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development as your child discovers “life, the universe and everything” (plan for a two hour event; 90 minutes of lecture and 30 minutes of Q&A).