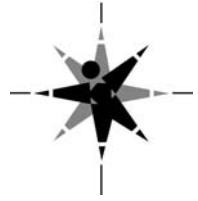


Does Montessori Prepare the Students for the Real World?



I find that this question is almost always in the minds of parents whether they are considering a Montessori school for their child or currently has a child in a Montessori environment. Year after year, when parents consider whether to transition into the public school system when their child is eligible for grade one, they refer to it as they need to go into the real world. So I would like to share something that I have recently read.

Maura Joyce, the Head of School from Montessori in the Redlands in California, posted a parent question and her response on an email list for Montessori schools.

Parent Question:

“This Montessori is all very well and good, but what about when children enter the ‘real world’; how does Montessori get them ready for the REAL world?”

Maura’s Response:

“Well, let’s define the REAL world...At your job, is everyone the exact same age? Is everyone sitting at their desks, doing the same thing at the same time? Are they doing tasks that require them to access knowledge, off the top of their heads, in a timed setting?

OR

Do you have different people with different levels of experience working in your office? Do you collaborate with your colleagues on projects? Do you need the right tools for the right jobs? Do you need to be able to set up work, concentrate on it, keep it organized, put it away? Do you have to be able to work independently, and work in a group? Do you need to try things and discover that they work or don’t work, this is, learn from your mistakes? Do you need to be able to problem solve? Communicate effectively?

Montessori IS the REAL world.

In a Montessori classroom, we are providing an environment for the students in which they can learn and practice the skills needed to perform in any chosen professional career. Below is a chart of knowledge and skills employers want to see in their employees in the 21st century, which I believe is in line with what Dr. Maria Montessori believed to be important, which she discovered over a century ago. This is another example of how we feel that Dr. Maria Montessori was ahead of her time.

Applied skills dominate rankings of knowledge and skills expected to increase in importance over next five years.

Rank	Basic knowledge and applied skills	Rank	Basic knowledge and applied skills
1	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving* 77.8%	11	Lifelong Learning/Self Direction* 64.0%
2	Information Technology Application* 77.4	12	Foreign Languages 63.3
3	Teamwork/Collaboration* 74.2	13	Mathematics 48.8
4	Creativity/Innovation* 73.6	14	Writing in English 45.4
5	Diversity* 67.1	15	Reading Comprehension 41.0
6	Leadership* 66.9	16	Science 38.7
7	Oral Communications* 65.9	17	English Language 32.8
8	Professionalism/Work Ethic* 64.4	18	Government/Economics 24.8
9	Ethics/Social Responsibility* 64.3	19	History/Geography 17.9
10	Written Communications* 64.0	20	Humanities/Arts 9.5

Number of respondents varied for each question, ranging from 398 to 424. Percents calculated out of total number of respondents electing "increase" in importance over the next five years.

* Indicates an applied skill

Allowing the students at an early age to be the ambassador of their own learning and giving them the freedom to explore is the key to cultivate critical, innovative and problem-solving thinkers. As you can see from the list of successful professionals below who attribute their 'out of the box' thinking and humanitarian involvement to the Montessori background they received growing up. Here are just a few of them.

- 1) **SERGEY BRIN & LARRY PAGE** - Google founders
- 2) **JEFF BEZOS** - Amazon founder
- 3) **JIMMY WALES** - Wikipedia founder
- 4) **WILL WRIGHT** - Video game pioneer, creator of the Sims
- 5) **GEORGE CLOONEY** - Academy award-winning actor, director, producer, humanitarian, United nations messenger of peace
- 6) **PETER DRUCKER** - Author, Management consultant, "social ecologist", awarded the presidential medal of freedom
- 7) **KATHARINE GRAHAM** - Pulitzer prize-winning author and Former owner & editor of the Washington Post
- 8) **HELEN KELLER** - Political activist, author, lecturer, awarded the presidential medal of freedom, one of gallup's most widely admired people of the 20th century
- 9) **YO YO MA** - United nations Peace Ambassador, winner of 15 Grammy Awards, Presidential Medal of Freedom & National Medal of the Arts
- 10) **ERIK ERIKSON** - Psychologist & author

So in the high demanding professions that our students will enter within the next decade or so, I believe Trevor Eissler is a parent who discovered Montessori for his own child and has now written two books: Montessori Madness and Parent to Parent Argument for Montessori Education. He has a five-minute clip, which is also on our website, that I think is beneficial and entertaining to see. Come see for yourself.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcgN0IEh5IA&feature=youtu.be&hd=1>

As always,
Virginia Ramirez, Principal