
MoRE - Montessori Research Europe Newsletter

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Pupils woodcraft (Montessori Farm School, Huntsburg, Ohio)

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New members

Editorial Clara Tornar

Dear all,
welcome to our first issue of the MoRE Newsletter in the year 2011. In my message of April 18th I informed you that I accepted the invitation of prof. Ludwig to take on the coordination of our network in the current year, and that I was beginning to work on the following three priorities:

- the organization of a web section dedicated to the network;
- the opportunity to encourage interaction between members through an electronic environment for networking;
- the need to conduct a survey concerning research activities carried out by members of the network, requirement also raised at the last MoRE meeting held in Bad Honnef.

I am pleased to give you the results of the work developed.

Concerning the first point, I inform you that the structuring of the MoRE web section has been completed. It is hosted by the Montessori-Europe website (www.montessori-europe.com). Special thanks to dr. Monica Salassa who took care of the layout of the pages and dr. Anja Kohrs, ME General Secretary, for her cooperation.

Concerning the second point, an interactive e-environment, consisting in forums and other functions, has been set up and organized. This e-environment is hosted by the Centre for Montessori Studies on its own website, and you will be able to enter it thanks to a link put on the MoRE web section. To access it a password is required. Therefore, each MoRE member will receive credentials in a e-mail

message. I invite you to visit this virtual space. You will find the list of MoRE members with the single profiles that you will be able to update by yourselves. Further, you will find a forum we could use for any discussion about research or other activities to be shared by the network members.

Concerning the third point, a questionnaire has been prepared for collecting the main data with regard to research activities carried out by MoRE members, either in progress either completed. The questionnaire has been inserted in a specific section of the above mentioned e-environment. You will be able to fill it in following the instructions you will find there. The data collected will be organized in a database by the Centre for Montessori Studies. I hope that getting updated information and data will facilitate the sharing of research themes and projects.

Finally, an important appointment to keep in mind is our next informal meeting which will be hold in connection with the XII Montessori-Europe Congress (Bratislava, Slovakia, 14-16 October 2011). For further information see the Montessori-Europe website.

I hope that you will enjoy this newsletter.

With kindest regards,

Clara Tornar
Italy, University of Roma Tre
Department for Educational Project
Centre for Montessori Studies
Contact: tornar@uniroma3.it

Contributions

The experience of learning in the accounts of Montessori classes graduates - the (pre) initial diagnosis

Beata Bednarczuk
(Poland, Maria Skłodowska Curie University in Lublin)

The student as an interpreter of the school situation

The modern school is characterised by a variety of theories explaining the mechanisms, patterns and determinants of learning. "The most important consequence for the processes of teaching and learning is to realize that the transfer of intact knowledge from one person to another is impossible" (Herron, 2000, p. 33). Learning can not be identified solely with the increase of the stock of possessed knowledge¹, it also relies on the transformation of already possessed knowledge, or building entirely new structures (Bauman 2005, p. 22). In the process of teaching a student makes "personal reconstruction of knowledge" (Kruszewski 1999, p. 9). "The progress of cognitive psychology and related pedagogy, the role of a personal cognitive, emotional, cultural and social factor as an intermediary in learning, which is more and more studied and used in school practice", justifies this assumption (Ibid.).

Learning is a process of gaining experience leading to permanent changes in the behaviour of the learner (Niemierko 2007, p. 22, cf. Fontana 1998, p. 160). Changes occur as a result of participation and involvement in teaching situations, through various activities undertaken by the student. Hence, in order to describe the learning process, the categories of a stimulus, response and reinforcement are poor and one-sided. All the concepts treating learning active and constructive contain three attributes according to Shuelle:

- 1 / the change of an individual's behaviour or of a skill to do something;
- 2 / the condition that the change must be the result of an action or experience;
- 3 / the condition that the change is permanent (Shuell after: Uljens 2006, p. 188, see also Fontana, op.cit., p. 160).

If the learning process is to bring a change, it must take place within an individual, but everyone learns differently, in a particular way. This means that "teachers do not give away information, but mediate in learning" (Herron, op.cit., p. 81). Learning is thus "the resultant of the ways of presenting the material by the teacher and the activities and methods of processing the material by the student" (Kawecki 2003, p. 142). The process of processing information has been widely described (see: Gagné, Briggs, Waggoner 1992, Mietzel 2003, Uljens 2006), and it is considered that its basic assumption is that an individual builds an internal representation, using perceptual data

supplied by the sensory system (Uljens, op . cit, p. 198). Thus, if effective learning is to take place, internal processes of learning must be affected, that is, the set of external tasks supporting these processes must be consciously organized (Gagne, Briggs, Waggoner, op.cit., p. 25). The support of the learning process² at school can take place in two ways (Kyriacou 1997, p. 39-40): thanks to the exposure, the information from the teacher or organizing the student's own work (academic work)³⁴. Using the concept of "exposing of the material by the teacher, " we focus on the educators' activities, consisting mainly in clear and ordered description and explanation of the new information through the direct teacher-student interaction, usually based on work with the entire class. Students' own work is a more complex concept, because it combines diversity of expressions of the student's activity (and hence teaching tasks), caused by the teacher's activities in a prepared, "informative" and liberating working environment. Since only the diverse nature of students' work and tasks ensures achievement of complex learning objectives, the more varied the strategies of pupils' work are, the more likely "that we will manage, as we intend, to educate all students" (Joyce, Calhoun, Hopkins 1999, p. 36). Thus, arranging different ways of reinforcing the student's work, it is worth taking into account two important aspects of student's learning: the degree of control and guiding (direct-indirect control) and the level of students' effort and engagement (high - low) (Kyriacou, op.cit., p. 39). Referring to the degree of control, remember Holt's words (with Klus-Stańska, Nowicka, 2005, p. 178): "I found that children began to learn more only when I began to teach them less." This is not about withdrawing from the process of managing the student's work, but about realizing, what Anna Brzezinska directs the attention to (1994), the more often such situations in which a teacher helps too fast, too long and too much take place, the more a child is convinced that without the aid he/she can not cope, he can not achieve anything. Thereby we deprive him/her of a chance to acquire the skills of independent learning. And the degree of involvement in school education is associated with the feeling of the sense of working at school, and in the aforementioned author's opinion this depends on previous experience, that is the feeling of success or failure experienced in school learning situations as well as on the assessment of their efforts in carrying out tasks (was it a justified effort when compared with the effect, whether the students felt satisfied or not, whether other people were satisfied with them or not) (Ibidem). If the sense of school work is understood as

² "We can not compel someone to acquire knowledge, or force such a decision on the part of the student. The aim of the educational interaction is to learn knowledge, but it is only possible to direct the student's activity in order to support his learning, or the student can try to do something that according to him or the teacher is most likely to lead to an end "(Kansanen after: Uljens 2006, p. 133).

³ I am departing here from an indication of another classification of education methods, because "if you know for sure what you need to teach students, thus ordering it into categories (such as facts, concepts, principles, etc.) it is possible to choose an effective method or strategy for each category" (Kruszewski 1999, p. 10).

⁴ Kujawiński wrote about methods of education and support {J. Kujawiński: Methods and forms of early education and self-education, "School Life"1997, No. 10}. Ashman and Conway break down the educational support into instruction and remediation - instructing and liaising (Ashman AF, Conway RNF, An introduction to cognitive education. Theory and applications, London d 1997 New York, Routledge.

¹ Mere gathering of information may not increase knowledge, but rather limit intellectually (Klus-Stańska, Nowicka, 2005, p. 214).

survival, as guessing responses expected by the teacher then when faced with "passing" a theme or a subject a student will not try to understand difficult concepts, because it means a great effort on his part. He will learn answers to the checking questions by heart, because that way he/she will survive with less effort (Herron, op.cit., p. 34). Thus, it is worth to counterbalance, analyze, and to decide responsibly on directing and providing guidance so that school education was associated with "the activity which you can control and not with the instrument of achieving or avoiding something" (Brophy 2002, p. 132). Searching for pedagogical implications of the cognitive learning theory we can point to a learning model developed by Winne (Winne 1987, Uljens, op.cit., p. 216-217). The model was divided into two components: the system of cognitive processing (the sensory system and response system) and the class environment (curriculum, the student's tasks, teaching). The basic assumption of this model explains that the cognitive processing and the class environment interact. Hence, by the same author, "students can not be passive recipients of teaching. They participate in the creation of what teaching means for them. (...) It is wrong to regard the teacher's behaviour as the sole cause of the pupils' achievements" (Winne after: Uljens, op.cit., p. 17). The student thus becomes not only an active subject, a creator of his/her own knowledge, but also an interpreter of the school situation and the learning process. Let the below cited arguments give evidence to the value of the students' reflection on learning.

The legitimacy of the student's experience of school and learning

1. The student is an interpreter of "the environment connected with the way in which the learner impacts on the perceived information (Norman after: Uljens, op., p. 218).
2. The student is perceived as a deliberately acting and thinking subject, gathering experiences, which can be regarded as the result of reflection on activities connected with learning. The student, as the teacher, reflects on these experiences and the outcome of this process is called situational conditioned teaching experience by Uljens (Ibidem., 158-159).
3. The learner is an active and selectively organized individual (Bruner after: Uljens, op., p. 189).
4. The importance of the education process is something that constitutes a part of, an element of the everyday participation and experiences connected with this participation (Lindblad, Perez 1990, p. 7).
5. A man moves in the sphere of culture and the meanings created by himself (Janowski, 1995, p. 30).
6. Just as the stories of the past do not constitute a mechanical reflection, but the actual act of exploring the importance of past experiences (Bertaux after: Lindblad, Perez, op., p. 8), so knowledge about the school and the learning process is not a passive record of school situations, but a set of "filtered", interpreted, structured data (Babiuch 1994, p. 101).

The process of assigning meanings to school events depends on at least two factors: - generally speaking - life knowledge that a child brings to school, and the conditions

that exist in schools, etc. (Konarzewski 1992, p. 92). Under the influence of targeted and extracurricular experiences at school, the students' natural or common knowledge about school is shaped (Babiuch, op.cit., p. 86). Trzebinski justifies that knowledge formed during school experiences is important for school teaching researchers for at least three reasons:

- 1/ it sets the context of the teacher's influences and student's cognitive activity;
- 2/ it sets a prototype of other systems of the individual's knowledge about social reality;
- 3/ directly affects social functioning of the individual in various groups and institutions (Trzebinski 1994, p. 9-10).

Moreover, the results of research on common knowledge implicated in school situations "may have important practical consequences, may in fact facilitate the formation of such social relations in the classroom and school, as well as the relationship between schools and families, so that it would be possible to create conditions favourable to the development of the individual" (Ibid, p. 16). Meanwhile, what is stressed by Krzysztof Kruszewski (2000), most research on factors affecting the quality of the educational process is based on finding links between elements of a teaching situation and the students' performance in tests while "(...) in life, in conversations about our student years we take a completely different and in some respects, reliable way to evaluate (...) - the memories related to our own way of life (Ibidem, p. 236). Therefore, I want to make the students' memories the subject of further consideration.

The experience of learning in the accounts of Montessori classes graduates - the (pre) initial diagnosis

The declared here (pre) initial diagnosis begins the next phase of my research and analysis. In 1998-1999 I conducted a study on the effectiveness of early school education models. It encompassed a total of 125 students, including 63 of the Montessori class (M), 62 in conventional classes (C)⁵. Today I would like to know, among others what - in retrospect - the experience of the Montessori school class graduates are, how they were interpreted, assessed, whether they has impact on further education in schools of higher type. The greatest difficulty lies in getting in touch with the former students, now adults, on the threshold of their professional career, and finding appropriate ways to communicate with them. Out of 24 questionnaires sent in mid-May this year to persons from the oldest class (1987) studied by me, 10 persons replied, which constitutes 41.6% of the researched students. The preliminary reconnaissance pertains to the narrow area of research, unfortunately it is not quantitatively significant, the collected answers do not constitute a basis for far-reaching generalizations, however, they represent an undeniable fact, an intimate, personal view of their years in the Primary School No. 27, reflection on the experience of learning in the M groups which can inspire, induce, encourage, make one think, encourage discussion. It will also be hard in such a small group of the former students,

⁵ The sample size was dictated by the size of the groups working with the individualized education. The school in Lublin was the only one in Poland, realising the full cycle of education in the Montessori system, on the second and third level.

each of whom interpreted the school in his/her own way, to define clear common features. In addition, data from the flashbacks, reminders, can be uncertain for several reasons. Firstly, a phenomenon interesting for the investigator may not evoke memories, images, but the subjects comes up with them at the request of the investigator, secondly, a phenomenon, a topic may recall memories or images, but the questioned persons may lack

the necessary skills to verbalize or evaluate them (Biggs, Bruder 1987, s . 35). However, the content of memories is a form of expression of varied experiences from school, and an expression of ambition to explain the present life situation (Lindblad, Perez, op., p. 8), it provides the material for the interpretation of experiences, and what these experiences affected.

The analysis of reflections related to the learning process was based on estimating the characteristics of this process⁶. Contrasting definitions of selected aspects of the learning process were described, and the task of the respondents was to locate the features according to the personal conviction on the five-point scale (see Łobocki 2000, p. 85), e.g.:

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| learning as following the teacher's orders and instructions step by step | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | independent learning, assisted by the teacher's and other pupils' advice |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|

I made the pre-initial sample – because it is based on the narrow material – interpretation of experiences of the group of the graduates taking into account the number of chosen high utmost values (that is 4 and 5) from the nine qualified surveys. I am presenting them in Table 1.

Tab. 1 Features of the learning process in indications of the respondents

| The characteristics of the teaching-learning process in a monologue, conventional, mass school | Number of choices | | | The characteristics of the teaching-learning process in a dialogue, open, alternative school |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| | Low extreme values (1,2) | The middle value (3) | High extreme values (4,5) | |
| Learning as following the teacher's orders and instructions step by step | 0 | 1 | 8 | independent learning, assisted by the teacher's and other pupils' advice |
| the teacher records and evaluates only increase of the student's knowledge | 0 | 2 | 7 | the teacher records and evaluates various manifestations of the students' achievements (e.g., contribution, commitment) |
| classes in the form of collective work prevail | 1 | 1 | 7 | classes in the form of individual and collective work prevail |
| boring learning | 1 | 2 | 6 | interesting learning |
| learning is the mapping of the teacher's content and activities | 1 | 2 | 6 | learning is connected with great freedom of students in the selection and organization of activities |
| learning content interpretation unified by the teacher and the textbook | 1 | 2 | 6 | the creation by students of personal explanation and interpretation |
| the same requirements for all students | 1 | 2 | 6 | differentiation of requirements depending on the student's abilities and interests |
| the teacher directs unified work of all students during the lesson | 2 | 1 | 6 | arranging conditions for diversified, but running at the same time, work of the students |
| <i>the teacher asks students questions</i> | 1 | 3 | 5 | <i>the teacher encourages students to ask questions and enounce their own views</i> |
| <i>the teacher concentrates on knowledge</i> | 1 | 3 | 5 | <i>the teacher concentrates on the student and his/her activities</i> |
| <i>the transfer of finished knowledge (facts and information) is the basis for learning</i> | 1 | 4 | 4 | <i>personal exploration, research and inquiry is the basis for learning</i> |
| <i>division of the curriculum into school subjects</i> | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>content grouped around the issues and tasks</i> |
| <i>aiming at avoiding errors in the class work, an error lowers the mark</i> | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>agreement to commit errors and correct them independently</i> |
| <i>education primarily involving intellectual activity, especially memory</i> | 3 | 3 | 3 | <i>education involving various forms of the student's activities: emotional, social, practical, intellectual ones</i> |

⁶ The learning process is one of the scales of the questionnaire developed by me, which consists of both the adjectival scales and open questions.

The adult people, coming from different backgrounds, experiencing different schools fates, different types of secondary schools, individuals with different life and professional aspirations, unanimously pointed out that what distinguishes, identifies their Montessori school history is **the independence in learning**, felt freedom of school learning, during which you could count on help from the teacher and classmates. Independence can be analyzed in various contexts, as an attribute of mind, creativity, activity and the property of personality (Tomaszewski after: Jakowicka 1994, p. 35). Taking into account other indications of the graduates, that is "learning connected with great freedom of students in the selection and organization of activities", "the creation by the students of personal explanation and interpretation", "arranging conditions for diversified and running at the same time, work of the students", they experienced all these symptoms of being independent. This significant memory, in the context of the negative phenomena in modern teaching perceived by Teresa Bauman that the learning activity has been deprived of an important characteristic, namely independence, "because learning is guarded by the teacher guiding it" (Bauman, op.cit., p. 19). The questioned graduates do not associate education with following the teacher's orders and instructions step by step and they experienced learning based on their own independence in running and organizing activities enabling learning. They evoked a feature which gives evidence to supporting the student's autonomy. Where does this experience come from? Self-learning is defined in the Montessori pedagogy as "free work" or "independent work" and constitutes the essence, the substance of the system. This means that the child within the prepared classroom environment, has freedom of choice. Freedom must not be identified with the rule of "do what you want", because in order to avoid chaos, arbitrariness, randomness, the child's workspace is prepared in such a way that the child's activity incurred in and by the space brings the freedom of:

- choice of materials and activities
- cooperation and communication
- time management.

Free work is not based on "the educator's omnipotence", does not limit confidence in the child, establishes a balance between the forces of development and the appropriate work environment (Schulz-Benesch, p. 8), or the excellent relationship between the direct and indirect control, instructing and freedom of choice described in the first part of this article. The exceptional and unique nature of the workplace, in which the people interviewed by me found themselves, lies in the fact that it constitutes an offer from which you can **choose according to the current and individual needs**. Kerry and Tollitt (after: Cohen, Manion, Morrison 1996, p. 193) describe the school area as **one of scientific resources**, the organization of which is based on specific principles⁷:

⁷The objectives of the organization of the learning space, are among others: enabling children to undertake various forms of activity, creating a climate in which every student can achieve the satisfaction of being a member of the group, determination of the conditions leading to the development of desired

- creating opportunities to perform the tasks focused on the child, guided or co-guided by the teacher as well as spontaneously organized by the students;
- enrichment of the formal child work through actual experience;
- creating opportunities to participate in the manual, expressive and creative games as the ways and means of learning - knowledge-building;
- providing students with the basic resources necessary for learning.

The choices of young people interviewed by me show that they could fully use this workshop and an important part of it was constituted by these resources necessary for learning, that is teaching materials containing the educational or developmental tasks included in the framework of the curriculum continuum. Thanks to the freedom of choice mentioned here, the curriculum contained in the materials has an individual and unique character. The work undertaken by the respondents according to **the separate learning programmes** is proved by further indications: "arranging conditions for diversified, but running at the same time, work of the students", "differentiation of requirements depending on the student's abilities and interests", "classes in the form of individual and collective work predominate". The questioned people remembered that at school they realized different tasks, in one room, in the company of about thirty friends of various ages, independently of one another. They recalled that it was also possible to realize them in a group and, therefore, consequently, to get interested in and join the work and operation of the classmates, without the organizational and procedural obstacles⁸.

It can be concluded that the style of work, emerging from the answers of the respondents, created the conditions for **the teacher to observe and register the changes in the child's behaviour, the way of his thinking and activity**. The assessment process performed in this way, takes place not only at the subject level, including the knowledge and school skills, but also at the "above-subject" level, expressing the developmental values which result from the student's overall work (Jakowicka 1994, p. 33.). The first, obvious step of evaluation of teaching effects, according to the declaration of the respondents was in their classrooms expanded to include **pedagogical reflection on the developmental characteristics of students, features of children's activities and their products, zeal and perseverance in work** ("the teacher records and evaluates various manifestations of the students' achievements (e.g., contribution, commitment)"). After years of learning in secondary schools the graduates of

behavior and social attitudes, development of fluency in using various tools of cognition / learning, helping each child to experience the optimal development in terms of capacity and potential, development of emotional maturity, development of the habit of individual learning in students, (M. A. Mehl, H. H. Mills, H. R. Douglass, Teaching in elementary school, New York 1967, The Ronald Press Company).

⁸ The only constraint is not disturbing others' work.

the Montessori classes noticed the commitment of teachers of the Elementary School No. 27 in the assessment involving the determination of changes in the growth process, describing individual cognitive preferences. Only such an attitude of the teacher provided the respondents with work in accordance with the individual learning programmes, as well as, which was noticed by the questioned young people, **teaching according to the diversified requirements**. "Educating according to the requirements facilitates directed development, raising achievements in the major interests and talents, as opposed to the development of comprehensive (...) assumed in the uniform school, in which the requirements are identical for all students" (op.cit, Niemierko, sec. . 172).

Independent learning according to individualized programmes and requirements generated a very important feature of learning in the opinions of the surveyed graduates, namely **learning, which deserves the name of "interesting"** (as opposed to boring). Contemporary children do not want to go to school because the school is boring. Andrzej Janowski (op.cit., p. 60-61) describing a school hidden programme indicates after Gannaway boredom is that an essential element of school life, this word is often repeated by students, especially when students feel encouraged to express opinions about school. Minimal cognitive activity of students (which actually does not create learning opportunities) makes school education boring, barren and stressful (Bauman op cit, 5, p. 22, Klus-Stańska, Nowicka, 2005, p. 215). Goodlad concluded that true and meaningful learning is rare at school, since students are not engaged in solving problems, but they perform memory tasks not requiring intellectual activity, they are rarely asked to demonstrate their initiative or create something new (Goodlad after: Ornstein, Hunkins op.cit., p. 116). Therefore, the way of achieving knowledge is of key importance. "Meaningful learning involves mastery of new meanings and, conversely, new meanings are the result of meaningful learning (Ausubel after: Niemierko op.cit., p. 125). "Students can not be passive recipients of teaching. They participate in the creation of what teaching means to them" (Winne after: Uljens, op.cit., p. 217). Building of a knowledge system is not like laying and tying bricks of information (Niemierko, op.cit., p. 99). The student obtains new knowledge if he/she links it with the already possessed knowledge, i.e., finds the relationships between content (Kruszewski, 1992, p. 258). Active and individualized student's work with the teaching material becomes important in the organization of the learning and teaching process. Then, during the active construction of active and open knowledge, the student's own activity is the analysis, interpretation, construction of meanings, giving sense, explanation. The student devises, tries, creates new characteristics and strategies. He/she looks for explanations when confronted with the meanings constructed by others, especially his classmates, and not as so far primarily by the teacher. Therefore, it can be concluded that the former students of the M classes **experienced their own learning as cognitively valuable because they were allowed to be involved, i.e., to choose** ("learning related to the large freedom in the selection and organization of activities") and **to create** ("creating

by students of personal explanations and interpretations"). To choose tasks, activities, a place of learning, working time, partners, cognitive strategies, teaching materials and to create their own, and therefore significant, interpretations and explanations of learnt content from the curriculum offer. Thus, they made their own contribution to the conduct of school activities, and consequently derived satisfaction from the learning course organized this way. This does not necessarily mean that their study was based entirely on learning by doing - in the light of the sustainability of choices between alternatives, "the transfer of ready knowledge" and "personal exploration and inquiry based learning." For the respondents meaningful learning is more coexistence in the educational process of social communication, and personal experiences in combination with time left for personal reflection (Brzezinski 2000, p. 120) – that is work based on the principle of freedom.

Conclusions

All the characteristics of learning described here are connected with the open, alternative, modern, dialogue school, ready for the developing child. The hierarchy of choices made by the respondents indicate that they are a consequence of experiencing learning as an independent operation and decisions of the young people were not accidental. And finally, the respondents experienced learning, rather than "being taught", because they were given freedom (among the limitations).

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A visit to a Montessori Farm School

Kerstin Signert & Bodil Cronquist
(Sweden, University of Gothenburg; Sweden, University of Malmö)

At the time of her death, Maria Montessori had developed a pedagogy for children up to the age of 12. She accomplished this through extensive observation of children of all ages but never had time to elaborate a pedagogy for older children. She described theoretically such teaching and laid the foundation of principles that would distinguish such an activity. Montessori believed that any extension of her teaching methods for older children must be conducted in the same way that she developed her pedagogy for younger children. She held that this should involve observations by teachers who are involved in the

teaching of older children based on her ideas. In the United States, there are a few schools where the teaching of older children is inspired by Montessori's approach. In this paper, Bodil Cronquist from the University of Malmö and Kerstin Signert from the University of Gothenburg discuss an inspiring visit to some of these schools in November 2010.



The Montessori Farm School (Huntsburg, Ohio)

Although Maria Montessori gave teachers relatively free license to work with the ideas in her lectures on the education of adolescents, Montessori education for teenagers has not become as common as Montessori education for younger children. Some attempts have been made to implement her ideas for adolescent education, for example in Holland and England where Montessori lectured during the later years of her life, but it was not until the end of the 1970s that interest began to grow in the United States. Today, however, there are many schools that cater to young people up to the age of 15.

In November 2010, we landed at Hopkins International Airport in Cleveland Ohio. We came to study the teaching of older students at several Montessori schools in the United States. Our hope was to get ideas that we could bring back with us to Sweden that could then be used in teacher education courses we run at our respective academic institutions. In this brief report, we discuss our experiences at a Montessori farm school.

The main goal of our journey to the United States was to visit the Montessori Farm School in Huntsburg, Ohio, about an hour's drive east of Cleveland. Before this visit, however, we visited an urban school in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, called Ruffing Montessori Middle School that caters to students aged between 11 and 14 years old. At this school, there is a positive and open atmosphere among staff and students and we felt immediately welcome. The students were active and moved freely in the large airy classrooms. They told us a lot about their school and were curious about who we were. The school's goals and philosophy are that pupils should *learn to learn* and find meaning in knowledge, both of which were plainly observable during our visit. For example, every Friday the children work in a variety of project teams, visiting the elderly and sick people, and playing music etc. Every day, they bring their own lunch and the theme is "No waste lunch" and the food should be healthy!

Then we visited the famous *Montessori High School*, located on the Case Western University campus at University Circle in Cleveland, Ohio. At this school, activity takes place in an older building that has been nicely renovated and is very aesthetically pleasing. During our visit, we met students aged 15-18 from different States in the United States and other parts of the world. Most of these students were boarding students who live in dormitories with girls and boys living in different buildings. At the school, students work individually, in pairs and in small groups. They sit and lie on the floor when they work. We found a variety of technology in every room including computers, interactive whiteboards, and screens. The prominent presence of these devices demonstrates that technology plays a significant role at the school.

After these two school visits, we will finally reach our ultimate goal for the trip, Montessori Farm School in Huntsburg. This school is situated in a beautiful area in the country, far away from any towns or villages. The environment around the school is breathtaking with undulating green meadows and forests. The air is clean and clear and we felt a tangible calming effect even as we got out of our rental car. Like the high school, this school also functions as a boarding school for young people aged 12-18.

Laurie and Jim Ewert-Krocker live in a building adjacent to the school's campus. Laurie is deputy rector and Jim is site manager for the farm and facilities. Over many years, they have planned and designed the farm environment and developed the school. Student activities focus on three main areas; academic studies, personal development and performing tasks on the working farm.

Half of the school's approximately 50 students come from other states in the US and from other countries around the world, but pupils from the surrounding area also attend the school. "Local" students usually go home every day but are welcome to stay at the school when they wish. The Farm School consists of several different buildings. The main building is newly built and contains classrooms an assembly room, a staff room, and a conference room. Through the beautiful windows of the building, you can see how trees reflect in a small lake outside. Everything is beautiful and appealing. Not far away is another large building which houses the dining room, kitchen, a large meeting room, and additional classrooms together with living spaces for boarding students. Hearing a rooster calling from the chicken coop reminds us of the animal life on the farm. A short distance from the main buildings is the school's barn where students care for horses, pigs, cows, sheep, and goats. We meet a small calf in the meadow that was born the week before. Young people are responsible for feeding the animals and keeping their stalls clean and tidy. Next to the barn is a large and airy workshop. It smells wonderful! Inside, the students produce nesting boxes, decorative wooden maple leaves, beeswax candles, and their own maple syrup. We also visit the school's fine greenhouse where tomatoes, lettuce and herbs grow throughout the year. Outside, cultivation boxes are in bloom even though it is November. The farm is surrounded by ninety acres of forest that, depending on the season, students use for cycling, hiking, skiing, or swimming.

Montessori believed that it is important that adolescents participate and contribute to society. She believed that teenagers desire to influence and to control their own financial situation. Following these principles, all young people help each other with all tasks on the farm. They clean, do laundry, cook, cultivate vegetables, and are responsible for managing and conserving the various crops. They work extensively with animals in the stables, crops in the greenhouse, repair bicycles and work with carpentry and pottery in the various workshops at the school. Because it is popular with locally cultivated, students sell part of their harvest and other products in a nearby market. Profits from these sales and a student run bed and breakfast go to students' family cash. At the school, young people are responsible for their own accounts and decide how money will be used, perhaps to buy more animals ...

While Montessori believed that young people should work together in a community that resembles a small village, she also believed that it is important for them to have time to themselves. Montessori Farm School has therefore built a semicircular room with large windows that look out on nature where students can sit quietly and think or read.

In their spare time, many of the young people seem to devote themselves to music and there are plenty of musical instruments in the various spaces where they spend time after school.

Even meals are created through community activities, with students helping to prepare food by cooking in cooperation with kitchen staff, setting tables, serving, and washing dishes.

During our visit, we talked with David, a host parent at the boarding school, who talked to us about working as a host parent. David and his wife live in a small apartment adjacent to the rooms of several boarding pupils. His main role is to work with young people and help them organize their everyday lives including time before and after school and on weekends. Each student has different tasks to achieve both before and after school days. All pulling together, both adults and young people, work to accomplish the various chores that need completing. Being a host parent is usually fun and rewarding, but of course there are also problems and conflict... it's not easy being a teenager!

Finally, summing up the experiences from our visit to Montessori Farm School; a school based on Montessori's idea of creating a separate small village for teenagers. We have seen how well young people interact in such a context. The school's students learn to work together, organize and develop together. There is a real sense of working "side by side" as students and teachers interact; students socialize, study and work in the realistic learning environment of the farm.

Having had this experience, it is now time for us to consider how we might adapt this form of schooling to the context of Swedish society without losing the core of what a Montessori inspired school for adolescents should look like!

(Report already published in: "Tidskrift för svenska Montessori-förbundet", (2011), n. 2; "Norsk Montessori-magasin", (2011).

Movie about the *Farm School*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRpURbn8gA0>

New publications

Maria Montessori – Collected Works

Edited by Harald Ludwig
in cooperation with
Christian Fischer, Michael Klein-Landeck and
Volker Ladenthin
in connection with the
Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)

Volume 7

The Child in the Family

Edited, introduced, critically revised and annotated
by Franz Hammerer and Harald Ludwig

[Freiburg etc.] : Herder, 2011

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Introduction by the editors

Franz Hammerer and Harald Ludwig
(Austria, University of Vienna; Germany, University of Muenster)

1. Aim and contents

The writing at hand by Maria Montessori is mainly concerned with the education of the young child from birth to the age of six. The Italian pedagogue pays special attention to the first years of life. As the title "The Child in the Family" already expresses, the book does not only address educators who are concerned with children of this early developmental stage on a professional level, but also explicitly mothers and fathers. Montessori often criticized that far too little is done with respect to the preparation of parents for their important duties to their children. Nowadays, scientifically sound, often institutionally organized preparation for all important roles of life can usually be found, except for the parental role.

Montessori sees as a possible reason for this that scientific research has been concerned too little with the first years of the child's life. The child in his early development is "the unknown quantity", the empty page in the representation of the development of the human being, as the pedagogue says in the first chapter of this book. This is based on a general social degradation of the young child as a weak and unfinished being, who first needs a long process of formation initiated by the adults in order to become an equal person.

Montessori emphasizes again and again that the child must be looked at from a new perspective, which has been neglected so far: "*The child has never been considered an independent personality, who needs to satisfy different needs than the adult in order to achieve the highest aims of life.*"

Rather, the child has to live in a situation of social suppression, which constrains his development because he is born into a world which is characterized by the needs of adults in its social and cultural structures. Montessori considers this a universal social problem of worldwide significance, independently of races, nations, cultures and religions: "*Law has never neglected human rights as greatly as it does in case of the child.*" In the chapter "The Newborn Child" Montessori insistently reveals with words and metaphors this entry of the little being into a grown-up world, which is strange to him and where his needs are not understood: "the tragedy of the newborn".

The problems touch upon the physical care which the young child needs to a lesser extent, even though a lot could be done in this area as well. The little human child has to be distinguished from the animal, as Montessori emphasizes repeatedly, because he does not set

natural instincts at certain ways of behaviour, but is a cosmopolitan being, who has to build his behaviour patterns and mental structures on the basis of very general natural dispositions in the active exploration with the natural, social and cultural environment himself. For this process she uses the expression "Incarnation" in the third chapter of this book on the basis of biblical Christian ideas, the incarnation of the mind, that means the construction and the integration of the mind, which become diversified, in the general human personality which develops. She describes this basic situation of the child after birth with the metaphor of the "mental embryo" and anticipates later insights by famous anthropologists like Adolf Portmann or Arnold Gehlen. Montessori listed under the expression "absorbent mind" in her late work the special abilities of the, apparently, completely helpless child at birth, in order to fulfill his basic task and she explained it very often with the example of early language acquisition.¹ Meanwhile, the child needs the help of the adult for the successful accomplishment of his construction processes, especially the support by the parents in the family education, but also by professional pedagogues as educators respectively teachers in the organized institutions of teaching and learning of different kinds.² However, this help of education and teaching and learning for the child has to be given in the right way. Most of all, mothers and fathers, pedagogues, all adults eventually, have to understand that they do not have to accomplish the process of construction of the human personality of the little child, but only the child himself can do so by actively dealing with his environment. Montessori often uses the words of the child, which have become the motto of Montessori education: "*Help me to do it myself*".

In many chapters of the book, especially in the last two, Montessori expresses this basic demand to parents and professional pedagogues, to the "new teacher." Montessori identifies as important qualification of all people working in the educational sector the ability of the controlled, reflected and understanding observation of children. In her contribution "The observation of very little children" (1923/24), which can be found in the appendix, she shows with the help of many examples to which surprising insights such observations can lead. The right basic adjustment to the child is a fundamental prerequisite. Affectionate attention to the child is essential. However, not the adult is the source of love, but the child is the "teacher of love", as the title of a small chapter on its own says.³

The educating grown-up must neither be like a sculptor, who stamps his ideas on a relatively freely configurable material nor only like a gardener, who creates good growth conditions for a human plant which flowers out, even though this metaphor is much closer to

Montessori's ideas than that of the artist who forms his work according to his own ideas. "*But we want to liberate ourselves off such a great mistake. The child is a human being. What is enough for a plant is not enough for a human being.*"⁴

For man is not only a being of nature, but by nature always a social as well as a cultural being. Therefore, an educating help is needed which supports the young person to work himself into this social and cultural environment as independent personality. Since this environment has become very complex today, it is a long lasting process of development and construction which expands over many stages and levels. The important help which the adult can give to the child, is, apart from a wary and empathetic educational style, which results from a tenor which respects the child and his needs in a loving way, the creation of an educationally "prepared environment" which offers scientifically sound courses of action for the process of learning to the child which are in accordance with his developmental and individual abilities. For a mere diffuse feeling of love for the child is not enough. It has to be an enlightened love, which uses the intellect – and this means for Montessori always science as well - in order to study the means and ways which are necessary and helpful for the child and his very own constructional work of his personality and to provide him with them.

Montessori also dedicates a chapter of its own in this book to this second topic of her education, the "prepared environment" based on educational scientific insights. Meanwhile, she also refers in other contexts to aspects of the creation of an environment, which is in accordance with the mental developmental needs of little children, and the adequate behaviour of parents and educators and she gives much advice for practice. Montessori characterizes her general basic principles of education⁵, especially the key phenomenon of concentration, "the polarisation of attention", as basis for effective processes of teaching and learning, and dedicates a closer analysis to this phenomenon in the chapter "The character of the child". She puts emphasis on the meaning of granting spaces for liberty for the child's development, which does not imply arbitrariness, and emphasizes the significance of the concrete action of the children according to their individual developmental needs. Especially the advancement of the senses and the differentiation as well as movement deserves special recognition for the physical and mental development of the little child. The Italian pedagogue explains all this with the help of many concrete examples and demonstrations of courses of action, which she takes from her observation of children for decades. This is especially impressive for family education in the central chapter "The child in the family".

The lectures from the 1920s which are included in this volume are from a time in which Montessori had advanced her educational design for a primary school

¹ Cp. the speech on this topic by Montessori in 1948 which can be found in the appendix.

² A remark to the German speaking reader: Montessori – following the international language use – speaks of "school" and "lessons" also with regard to institutions of learning and education for the child under the age of six – for example the "nursery"- and she calls the staff predominantly "teacher".

³ Cp. also text n. 8 "The child in the family" from 1949 in appendix 1.

⁴ Cp. text n. 1 (from 1915) in appendix I.

⁵ Especially cp. the chapters "the new education" and "General remarks on my method".

for children from the age of six to twelve years⁶ and in which she had rich experiments of her ideas in different cultural contexts at her command. Only occasionally, her demonstrations in these lectures are in the style of scientific studies, even though she very often refers to research results, if any, then in the chapter “the character of the child”, in which she demonstrates the course of the child’s working and learning processes with the help of graphics. However, on the background are her scientific studies which led her – in 1896, she was one of the first female doctors of Italy – from medical science to education and then to a professor of pedagogical anthropology⁷ at the University of Rome. In addition to that, there is her practical experience, which she gained at first around 1900 from two years of work with mentally disabled children at an institute for remedial pedagogy in Rome, and then in the “Children’s House”⁸ for children at the age of two to six, which she founded in 1907 in cooperation with a Roman construction company in a blighted area of Rome⁹, and after that in further institutions.

When she lived in Barcelona (1916-1936), Montessori had a private educational research institute and a pilot school for the further development of her pedagogy for many years.¹⁰ There, she also conducted religious-educational experiments, which she reports on in her contribution “Die religiöse Erziehung im aktiven Leben des Kindes [The religious education in the active life of the child]”.¹¹ Montessori maintained such pilot schools later on during her time in the Netherlands (1936-1939), too, in Laren (North Holland), where she began with experiments on expansion of her pedagogy to the secondary level and during her stay in India (1939-1949) in Kodaikanal (South India), where she substantiated and displayed her conception of a “Cosmic education” together with her son Mario, which she had designed in the 1930es. Her late text from

1949, which can be found in the appendix I, which also has the title “The Child in the Family”, is characterized by this broad evolutionary world outlook of her “cosmic theory”.

The demonstrations of this rhetorically highly gifted pedagogue in these lectures, which are collected in this book and which address a large audience, are kept in a coherent and metaphorical language, which is very well approachable for all people interested in education, especially mothers and fathers, too. Certainly, some remarks, Montessori critically makes on society and education of her time, have become irrelevant in the meantime due to further development. However, even today these lectures with their often pointed and provoking theses, their insights, which are based on science and practical experience and detailed observation of children, their innovative ideas, their concrete, impressively and sometimes even humorously told examples can give important insights and impulses to all pedagogues who are interested in education and learning of little children, especially to parents.

2. History of the text

In order to classify the texts of this book in its present form more precisely and scientifically and to understand them more deeply, it should be helpful to acquaint oneself with their complicated evolutionary history more closely.

For Montessori’s books, especially the ones which were generated as collection of her lectures, there are both for the books as such and for the single texts in many cases numerous variations and primary stages in different languages, which makes it even more difficult to compile a really authentic text. The present historical-critical edition follows the leading principle which holds for all volumes of Montessori’s collected works, to take as basis for the text design the “last hand” edition, which means the form in which the book was published by Montessori last.¹² For in general one can act on the assumption that such an edition contains Montessori’s thoughts in its most developed form. The writing “The child in the family” was at last published in the lifetime of Montessori in 1936 in Italian.¹³ This edition shows – as Guenter Schulz-Benesch already asserted in his text-critical edition of the basic speeches of this book¹⁴ -

⁶ Her broad work „L’autoeducazione nelle scuole elementari“(= “The self education of the child in the primary schools”; = “The Advanced Montessori Method”) is dedicated to this primary school, which was published in 1916 in Rome with a theoretical and a practical part. Cp. Collected Works (in the following = CW) Vol. 6/1 and 6/2 (in prep.).

⁷ “Pedagogical anthropology” was understood back then as an empirical science in the style of conventional natural sciences, which studied by way of empirical studies with exact measurements regularities of the human being and his development. Cp. CW VI. 2/1 and 2/2: “Anthropological writings” (in prep.).

⁸ Instead of “kindergarten” Montessori – in addition to the general term “school”- coined on advice of her friend Olga Lodi the expression “children house” („casa dei bambini” = „Children’s House”) as special term for her institution of education for little children.

⁹ Cp. her detailed description of these origins of her pedagogy in her first educational main work from 1909, which got the title “The Discovery of the Child” in its fifth edition from 1950. See CW vol. 1, Freiburg 2010. In the following quoted as Montessori, discovery 2010.

¹⁰ Also some Montessori schools in other countries were “pilot schools” for Montessori, as the Montessori school of the interwar years in Vienna. Cp. the preliminary remark on text no. 6 “The Montessori education” (1928) in appendix I.

¹¹ Cp. the text no.2 in appendix I. This lecture originally belonged to the series of basic lectures, on which the book is based, which were held by Montessori at the “pedagogical week” in Brussels in the autumn of 1922.

¹² E.g. Montessori’s “handbook” was neither published on the basis of the first English speaking edition from 1914 in the context of the edition of the collected works nor in the second Italian edition from 1930, which was changed a lot by Montessori, but in the last form of the third Spanish edition from 1939 which she worked upon herself. The preceding editions were consulted in comparison and varying or additional text designs were presented to the scientifically interested reader in footnotes and in the appendix. Cp. Montessori, Maria: Praxishandbuch der Montessori-Methode [Practical Handbook of the Montessori Method], CW VI.4, Freiburg 2010; in the following quoted as Montessori, Practical Handbook 2010.

¹³ Montessori, Maria: Il bambino in famiglia, Todi 1936; in the following quoted as 1936 (it.).

¹⁴ Montessori, Maria: Dem Leben helfen, herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Günter Schulz-Benesch, Kleine Schriften [Helping Life, edited and introduced by Guenter Schulz-

that it is dependent on the German first edition, which was published in 1926 in Vienna. However, this reference is not recorded. Actually, this Italian edition from 1936 is lacking a preface, an introduction and any reference notes on sources. Compared to the German first publication some additional texts by Maria Montessori are included, which were published in many cases already beforehand in periodicals.¹⁵ A comparison shows that the texts were revised in many cases, which is neither explained nor indicated.

Whether and in how far Maria Montessori herself was concerned with the choice of these additional texts and with the design of this Italian edition as such, cannot be said for sure. After the organization of an international Montessori congress in Rome in 1934 and the break with the fascist regime of Mussolini following soon, which was dominant in Italy and closed down her schools, Montessori did not return to Italy until the post-war period. When she was not in other countries for lectures and training courses, she lived in Barcelona, where she had already been living since 1916.¹⁶ Like Schulz-Benesch reports, Mario Montessori jun., Maria Montessori's grandson, was of the opinion that Montessori was not herself concerned with this edition because she was absent in Italy.¹⁷ But a cooperation does not necessarily require a personal presence, but could have been taken place by different means of communication, too, as it is obviously the case for works that were published in Spain after 1936 for example. This can only be decided more precisely, when all documents from Montessori's archives of abatement at the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) in Amsterdam, which have not been scientifically processed and only partially developed until now, and the letters which are in the possession of the family are open to scientific research and accordant evidence can be found. Anyway, until now there are no indications that Montessori did not approve of the Italian edition of "The Child in the Family".¹⁸ Therefore, one can assume that it was published after her approval and despite the adaptation by persons who are not named it reflects her ideas altogether reliably.

In order to increase the authenticity of the texts which are included in the Italian edition, in the edition at hand

Benesch, Little Writings] Vol.3, Freiburg 1992, Part I: Das Kind in der Familie und andere Vorträge [The Child in the Family and Other Speeches], p. 9-73; here p.11; in the following quoted as Schulz-Benesch (ed.) 1992.

¹⁵ For details on the genesis and publication of these texts compare in the following the footnotes on the title of the respective chapter.

¹⁶ In 1936, Montessori had to escape from there to England first because of the beginning of the Spanish civil war. From 1936 until 1939, she lived in the Netherlands, until she went to India shortly after the beginning of the Second World War for a training course, where she had to stay after Italy's entry into the war until the end of the world war "as hostile foreigner" (from the point of view of the English who ruled in India).

¹⁷ Cp. Schulz-Benesch (Ed.) 1992, p.11.

¹⁸ In the preface of the Spanish book "El niño" ("The child" 1937; German: "Kinder sind anders [Children are Different]", 1952) Montessori for example criticizes the overhasty publication of this collection of lectures in France ("L'enfant", 1936) and England ("The Secret of Childhood", 1936) and only explicitly declares the Spanish edition completely authentic.

these are critically compared with previous publications of the book and single texts and deviations in the choice of words or additional text passages are reflected in the footnotes.¹⁹ Since the German first publication from 1926²⁰ is especially important, it is dwelled on its origin in the context of the Montessori work in Vienna more precisely.²¹

However, already controversial is the date of publication of this Vienna edition because no indication can be found in the book itself. It only says: "A part of these lectures was held by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1923 in Brussels and in the same year they were published in French in the periodical "La Femme Belge". The translation at hand was done by the working group of the Vienna Montessori school." In many cases one concluded that the book was published in 1923, which is already implausible due to the shortness of time after her publication in the Belgium periodical, even if one takes into consideration that the five main lectures were actually not held in 1923, but already in the autumn of 1922 and partially already published at the end of 1922 in the mentioned periodical.²² Nevertheless, in the new extensive Montessori bibliographies 1923 is mentioned as date of publication of the book as well.²³ Schulz-Benesch, however, mentions – like the Austrian national library – the year 1928, and he refers to the indications in the bibliography of the Vienna edition among others.²⁴ This indeed mentions contributions which are not in accordance with the year of publication of 1923. However, this bibliography only mentions literature until 1926. The end of 1926 is also the actual date of publication of the German first publication of "Das Kind in der Familie und andere Vorträge [The Child in the Family and Other Lectures]", as the full original title reads.

The following reasons argue for it. In the newspaper "Neue Freie Presse [New Free Press]" from 27th November 1926, one can read in the introduction on a preprint with the title "Das Kind in der Familie [The Child in the Family]": „With permission of the publication house of the Montessori school Vienna we publish in the following parts of a chapter from the new book of

¹⁹ Cp. in the appendix I text no. 5 "Prolog zu 'Das Neugeborene' [Prologue on "the newborn]" and the associated remarks on the complicated history of this text.

²⁰ Montessori, Maria: Das Kind in der Familie und andere Vorträge [The Child in the Family and Other Lectures, Vienna: self published by the Montessori school (1926); in the following quoted as 1926 (Germ.).

²¹ Cp. for the Montessori work in Vienna during the interwar period: Hammerer, Franz: Maria Montessoris pädagogisches Konzept – Anfänge der Realisierung in Österreich [Maria Montessori's pedagogical conception – the beginning of the implementation in Austria], Vienna 1997 (Diss. Univ. Vienna 1995); in the following quoted as Hammerer 1997.

²² Cp. the footnotes on the respective titles and the overview in the bibliography in appendix III under A, I for precise bibliographical data.

²³ Cp. Böhm, Winfried (Ed.): Maria Montessori Bibliographie 1896-1996 [Maria Montessori bibliography], Bad Heilbrunn 1999, p.27; in the following quoted as Böhm 1999; Tornar, Clara (Ed.): Montessori Bibliografia Internazionale – International Bibliography 1896-2000, Roma 2001; p. 25; in the following quoted as Tornar 2001.

²⁴ Schulz-Benesch (ed.) 1992, p.10.

the famous pedagogue, which will be published shortly."²⁵ 100 copies were printed as preprints and autographed by Montessori. This was probably at the end of November. For Montessori stayed several days in Vienna, when she came from Argentina to travel to Berlin, where she gave a training course in 1926/27, as one can gather from a further newspaper contribution from 26th November 1926 of the "Neue Freie Presse [New Free Press]" with the title "Die Befreiung des Kindes [The Liberation of the Child]".²⁶ In an offprint of the chapter "Die Umgebung des Kindes [The Environment of the Child]" from 1927 the periodical "Die Quelle [The Source]" the year 1926 is mentioned as date of publication of the writing.²⁷ In a review of the book "Das Kind in der Familie [the Child in the Family]" in the "Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik [Quarterly for Scientific Pedagogy]" from 1930 Anton Kolbábek mentions 1926 as year of publication.²⁸

The basis of this book are five lectures which Maria Montessori held in the autumn of 1922 in French in Brussels, four of which²⁹ during the "Pedagogical week", which was organized in September of 1922 by the "École Sociale Catholique", one of which³⁰ on 24th October 1922 on invitation of the Catholic oriented periodical "La femme belge", in which the lectures were published, too. Only the lead text and the text "Das Neugeborene [The Newborn]" in the German first publication do not belong in the context of the lectures of Brussels.³¹ These texts were obviously published for the first time here.

The leading personality of the Montessori work in Vienna of that time and the leader of the Montessori school in a working-class neighborhood of the city, Lili E. Roubiczek (married Peller)³², apparently had the

greatest influence on the translation and editing of Montessori's lectures for the German book edition of 1926.³³ It was probably Roubiczek as well who won over the professor for biology, Adolf Pascher, who taught in Prague, for the composition of a preface.³⁴ He states for the German adaptation: "Only those passages were left out which have a very local meaning". The Montessori researcher Günter Schulz-Benesch from Muenster can take the credit for the first text critical edition of the five main lectures of the German first edition with a comparison with the French original texts in 1992. He asserts that not only a whole lecture by Montessori, the one on religious education³⁵, and numerous parts with religious references, but also

Vienna in 1920, where she began to study psychology with Karl and Charlotte Buehler. In 1921, she did the Montessori training course in London (together with Clara Grunwald, who played an important role in the German Montessori movement) and in 1922, she opened, together with the Australian Lawrence A. Benjamin and the English Margaret Priestman (both had also taken part in the training course in London) in Vienna X, Troststraße 98, an exemplary Montessori institution with the "House of the children". Lili Roubiczek was (under city council for social affairs and health Julius Tandler) consultant for nurseries at the municipality of Vienna and, therefore, had a strong support for the spreading of Montessori education. From 1922 to 1934, Roubiczek published more than thirty contributions on Montessori education in different periodicals (See Hammerer 1997, p. 209f). Until the beginning of the 1930s, there was an intensive bond and cooperation between Maria Montessori and Lili Roubiczek, which, however, ceased, when Roubiczek turned to psychoanalytic education and tried to connect this with Montessori education. In 1934, Roubiczek-Peller emigrated with her husband Sigismund to Palestine, where she founded an elementary school in Jerusalem. Since 1937, she first worked as educational consultant and then as psychoanalyst in the US. See: Berger, Manfred: Lili Esther Peller-Roubiczek – Ihr Leben und Wirken für die Montessori-Pädagogik [Her Life and Work for Montessori Education], in: Das Kind [The Child], no. 20/1996, p. 85-98; furthermore: Hammerer 1997, especially p. 182ff.

For further connections between Montessori education and the general school reform in Vienna cp. text no. 4 "Die Befreiung des Kindes [The Liberation of the Child]" in appendix I and the remarks there.

³³ In the edition of writings by Lili Roubiczek-Peller under the title "On Development and Education of Young Children – Selected Papers", New York 1978, by Emma N. Plank (born Spira, 1905-1990) one can find a bibliography with Roubiczek's works (p.XXV ff). Under the year of publication of 1926, which is followed by a question mark, the book "Das Kind in der Familie [The Child in the Family]" is mentioned as a translation by her (with the addition: "anonymous"). Plank-Spira had been connected with the "House of children" by Lili Roubiczek since 1922 and had been working there as teacher since 1926. She also worked with Anna Freud (1895-1982), the daughter of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In 1938, she had to emigrate to the US after the Vienna Montessori institutions had been closed, where she worked as professor among other things.

Since the middle of the 1980s, she lived in Vienna again. Cp. Hammerer 1997 and "Gedenkworte zum Tod von Frau Emma Plank-Spira [Words of honor to mark the death of Mrs. Emma Plank-Spira]" (by Franz Hammerer, Harold Baumann and Hilde Steinemann), in: Montessori-Werkbrief [Montessori Work Letter] 28 (1990), no.3, p.122-125.

³⁴ Cp. The printing of the preface and further information on Pascher in the appendix II.

³⁵ See in the appendix I, text no.2: "Die religiöse Erziehung im tätigen Leben des Kindes [Religious Education in the Active Life of the Child]".

²⁵ Neue Freie Presse [New Free Press], 27th November 1926, p.12. These are extracts from the central chapter "Das Kind in der Familie [The Child in the Family]".

²⁶ Cp. Neue Freie Presse [New Free Press], 26th November 1926, p.7. See the print of this text under no. 4 in appendix I.

²⁷ Montessori, Maria: Die Umgebung des Kindes [The Environment of the Child], in: Die Quelle [The Source] 77 (1927), p.117-122, here p.117.

²⁸ Kolbábek, Anton: Buchbesprechungen zur Montessori-Pädagogik [Book Reviews on Montessori Education], in Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik [Quarterly for Scientific Pedagogy] 6 (1930), No.4, p.598-599 (short reviews on several Montessori books), here p.598. – It is, however, possible that a private translation had already circulated since the end of 1923 in the circle of the Vienna Montessori pedagogues. Cp. the remark in the preface by Adolf Pascher, which is printed in appendix II.

²⁹ It is a matter of the texts "Allgemeines über meine Methode [General Remarks on My Method]", "Der Charakter des Kindes [The Character of the Child]", "Die Umgebung des Kindes [The Environment of the Child]", "Die neue Lehrerin [The New Teacher]". More information on the bibliographical notes in the footnotes on the titles of the respective chapters.

³⁰ The text of the central chapter "Das Kind in der Familie [The Child in the Family]".

³¹ Cp. Schulz-Benesch (ed.) 1992, p.9f.

³² Lili Esther Roubiczek-Peller (born on 28th February 1898 in Prague, died on 30th August 1966 in Monroe, New Jersey) is considered the pioneer of Montessori education in Vienna of the interwar period. She studied biology and education from 1917-1920 in Prague at the German university and came to

“in general educational respect, numerous factual and linguistic subtleties” fell victim to the abrasion of those times.³⁶

Due to the unclouded and close contact between Maria Montessori and Lili Roubiczek at that time³⁷ the Italian pedagogue was presumably informed about the main features of the editing of the German issue. Therefore, the abdication from the religious aspects could absolutely have answered to her intentions. For Montessori always attached importance to make her educational message accessible to everybody, independently of their religious or ideological conviction. In Brussels she talked in front of a Catholic oriented audience, which was open for her personally shared beliefs. The target group in Vienna – like the one in Berlin – however, was ideologically oriented in a different way. Many of the local Montessori pedagogues were of Jewish origin and rather had liberal and socialistic ideas. In such situations Montessori did not put her personal belief forward in order not to complicate the general accessibility of her pedagogy.³⁸ However, she was probably not familiar with the details of the edition, since she was not able to speak German.³⁹ In the historical critical edition of the book “Das Kind in der Familie [The Child in the Family] at hand the different versions of the text, additional parts and omissions in continuation of the text critical work by Schulz-Benesch are considerably made accessible in order to offer the readership an authentic text as possible and to allow for a personal opinion.

In 1934/35, a complete Dutch translation of the German book “Das Kind in der Familie” [The Child in the Family] was published in a series of the Dutch periodical “Montessori-Opvoeding” (= “Montessori Education”).⁴⁰ The editorial staff says in the introductory remark that the book at that time has been “sold out for many years”. The translation is very close to the German publication. A Dutch translation of the French lecture “The Child in the Family” from 24th October 1922 was published in the same periodical at the beginning of

1923.⁴¹ This translation answers to the French original text to the greatest extent possible.⁴²

A new German edition of the book on the basis of the edition from 1926 was published in 1954 by order of the Deutsche Montessori Gesellschaft [German Montessori Society] (DMG), which was re-established in 1952.⁴³ Their president Paul Scheid points in his preface to the fact that the texts were revised in consideration of the Italian edition from 1936.⁴⁴ However, their additional texts are not adopted. Since this edition from 1954 has become relatively famous in German-speaking regions, it is taken into account in this edition by comparison.

A new Italian edition of the book “Il bambino in famiglia” was only published a few years after Montessori had died (1952) in 1956.⁴⁵ This edition contains in contrast to the first Italian edition from 1936 - as a comparison shows - additional changes of the texts, which are not indicated, by editors who are not mentioned and removes itself from an authentic text design. Nevertheless, this edition apparently became the basis for all further translations in other languages.

Still in the same year, in 1956, an English translation of the Italian edition was published.⁴⁶ This translation, which was made by Nancy Rockmore Cirillo, is not very reliable and throughout more periphrasis than translation which is close to the text. It even contains nonsensical translation errors.⁴⁷ Yet, this text, which was published in many editions, is apparently until today the only English translation. Furthermore, there

³⁶ Schulz-Benesch (Ed.) 1992, p.11.

³⁷ Clara Grunwald (1877-1943), authoritative personality of Montessori education in Berlin during the interwar period, as Jew murdered in Auschwitz, writes to her friend and Montessori teacher Elsa Ochs: „Dear Elsa, ... I get along especially well with a young Jew and enthusiastic socialist from Vienna. She is full of idealism and wants to change the world overnight. The girl gets along brilliantly with Mrs. Montessori, who surely is fascinated by her happy and straightforward personality. ... Lili, which is the girl's name, could once play an important role for Montessori education. She has charisma, the expertise and the necessary eloquence.“ (Quote after Berger, Manfred, a. a. O., p.93.).

³⁸ Also cp. the introduction to text no. 2 in appendix I.

³⁹ Cp. Schulz-Benesch (Ed.) 1992, p.11.

⁴⁰ Montessori, Maria: Het kind in het gezin [The Child in the Family], in: Montessori Opvoeding 17 (1934), pp.81-83, 91-92, 98-100, 125-128; 18 (1935), pp. 7-8, 21-22, 29-32, 33-36, 41-43, 51-52, 58-60. The text was translated into Dutch by L. de Jong-Harmeijer.

⁴¹ Montessori, Maria: Het kind in het huisgezin [The Child in the Family], in: Montessori Opvoeding 6 (1923), n.3 (24th February 1923), p.17-20, and n.5 (7th April 1923), p.33-37.

⁴² More information in the footnotes on the text of the chapter “The Child in the Family”.

⁴³ Montessori, Maria: Das Kind in der Familie und andere Vorträge, neu herausgegeben von der Deutschen Montessori-Gesellschaft, besorgt von Marga Braunger und Karl Brusius unter Mitwirkung von Helene Helming, mit einem Vorwort von Paul Scheid [The Child in the Family and Other Lectures, re-edited by the German Montessori Society, effected by Marga Braunger and Karl Brusius with the collaboration of Helene Helming, with a preface by Paul Scheid] Stuttgart: Klett 1954; In the following quoted as 1954 (Ger.).

⁴⁴ Cp. the printing of this preface in appendix II. There you can also find closer information on Paul Scheid.

⁴⁵ Montessori, Maria: Il bambino in famiglia, Milano: Garzanti 1956.

⁴⁶ Montessori, Maria: The Child in the Family, translated by Nancy Rockmore Cirillo, Chicago: Regnery 1956; Second edition. 1970; also New York: American Montessori Society 1970; furthermore, London 1975 (Pan Books) and Oxford 1989 et al. (as volume 8 of the “Clio Montessori Series”); eventually, in 1991 in Madras (India) in the series of the Kalakshetra Publications.

⁴⁷ As an example here is a reference to a text passage from the last chapter “The Adult and the Child”. It says there in the Italian text (cp. 1936 (it.), p.107f resp. 1956 (it.), p.141f), “During the implementation of the aims of modern pedagogy one encountered difficulties, which have to be overcome: “Therefore, educational science developed many problems...” („ha sollevato“)...“. In the English translation it says: “Yet, educational science has already solved a lot of problems (“has solved“)...“. See Montessori, Maria: The Child in the Family, Oxford 1989, p.68f or Madras 1991, p.116f. In the course of the text Montessori exactly bemoans that modern experimental education only develops problems, but does not solve them.

is, according to information in the mentioned bibliographies a Greek translation from 1977 (Athens), a Korean one from 1982 (Seoul) as well as a Portuguese respectively a Brazilian one from 1987 (Rio de Janeiro).⁴⁸

In the present edition of the book "The Child in the Family" in the context of the "Collected Works" all texts were newly translated into German on the basis of the Italian edition from 1936. For the lectures which were already included in the German editions from 1926 and 1954 their translations were consulted by comparison and taken into consideration if possible because their wording is widespread in the German-speaking Montessori literature. The additional texts in the footnotes and in the appendix were also translated from their original languages into German.⁴⁹ All translations were worked on by the editors and annotated.

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For the development of the new translations of the five lectures of the editions from 1926 respectively 1954 from Italian we are truly grateful to Maria Schweigl and Eva Pico. The translation of the other lectures into German – also the translation of the appendix – was done in cooperation with the editor, Harald Ludwig, by Rosa Mezzanotte (Italian, Spanish) and Lena Siebenkotten (English, Dutch) in the context of their work at the research archive for Montessori education of the Westfaelische Wilhelms-Universitaet in Muenster. Also sincere thanks are given to these assistants.

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⁴⁸ Cp. the overview in appendix III under A, I.

⁴⁹ Only for text no.2 "Die religiöse Erziehung im tätigen Leben des Kindes [the Religious Education in the Active Life of the Child]" in appendix I the already published translation from French by Dr. Karin Becker was adopted from Montessori, Maria: Gott und das Kind, hg. und eingeleitet von Günter Schulz-Benesch, Kleine Schriften [God and the Child, edited and introduced by Guenter Schulz-Benesch, Little Writings] Vol.4, Freiburg 1995, p.44-55. For more information see in the appendix. For the transfer of text passages from the French original texts from 1922/23 in the footnotes, convenience translations by Mrs. Dr. Karin Becker were used, which are available in the Montessori archives of the University of Muenster.

this volume and the whole edition of Montessori's collected works. Not least, we are grateful to our wives for their fine grasp for our work for the edition of this book. We hope that it will give a lot of helpful encouragement and suggestions to all who are involved with or interested in the education and advancement of little children in their first years of life.

Vienna and Muenster, April 2011
Franz Hammerer, Harald Ludwig

Conference abstracts

Maria Montessori: from a pedagogy of learning competence to a theory on "Learning How to Learn"

Paper abstract presented for the ECER Conference to be held in Berlin, Freie Universität (13-16 September, 2011)

Cristina Stringher
(Italy, University of Roma Tre, Centre for Montessori studies)

Keywords

Montessori education, learning to learn, APA learner-centered principles.

Abstract

The aim of this article is to show how Montessori's work is an antecedent to contemporary psychological principles on learning based upon the most recent research. More specifically, in her writings, Montessori seems to set the basis not only for a theory about learning how to learn, but more importantly for a pedagogy of learning which is focused on individual competencies, an answer to what most knowledge economies are looking for in today's global arena.

Factors such as post-world-war-II economy, women entering the job market, mass schooling, technological advances, population migrations and ageing, the internet era and globalization have all impacted the new millennium with the quest for a school that not only reproduces the social status quo, but also develops those competencies needed to compete in the knowledge society. (OECD, 2008b; Rychen & Salganik, 2001; OECD, 2003; European Commission, 2005; Wells & Claxton, 2002; Brint, 1998; Knowles, 1990). Primary among those competencies seems to be the capacity to learn and keep learning throughout life to be able not only to work and maintain a job, but also to engage in active citizenship (European Union, 2005; Hoskins, B. & Fredriksson, U., 2008).

Policy makers are in need of answers to growing and more complex learning needs and to improve education (Borman et al., 2002; Buechler, 2002; Scheerens, 2000; OECD, 2008a). But what exactly do we need in schools? What is the essence we should be teaching to young generations?

Montessori's inductive movement from pedagogical action to psychological theory could be said revolutionary nowadays, in a world where pedagogy seems to "follow" sociology, psychology and brain

research. Brain research establishes what the brain is and how it functions, while pedagogy should find ways to aid the development of what brain sciences “find”. Montessori does not translate any psychological nor sociological theory into “pedagogical practice” and in this precise choice lies Montessori’s revolutionary pedagogic genius: an education that is truly serving human development and socialization to post-modern societies needs to be based upon accurate observation of human development. As simple as this: pedagogy should not hinder but foster human development. It also needs to focus closely not on mere rote knowledge but on combinatory logic yielding to secure competence in managing one’s learning and other key competencies. Montessori pedagogy does precisely this: it encourages the development of free and autonomous learners.

Maria Montessori’s work has long been neglected and confined to a vast yet unpopular elite of schools and followers. In spite of more than 22,000 schools operating in five continents (Centenary of the Montessori Movement Web site, 2006; Whitescarver, K. & Cossentino, J., 2008), in Italy even educated people in the pedagogical sector ignore her basic principles on learning and have but an impressionistic vision of her work. To add to the confusion, many so-called “Montessori experts” show a very restrictive interpretation of the Pedagogist’s education, for instance rejecting any quantitative assessment of learning outcomes as not pertinent to “Montessori philosophy”. In recent years Montessori pedagogy received new attention, especially in the United States, where it is studied among pioneering school approaches, as the latest OECD publication on innovative pedagogies confirms (2008a).

The methodology to support these arguments is based upon a philological reading of Montessori’s work aimed at tracing learning to learn components in Montessori education. In addition, this article draws a comparison between Montessori’s Learning to learn principles, the 14 learning principles by the American Psychological Association (APA, 1990-1997) and learning to learn basic features as defined by the author (Stringher, 2010).

Results of this analysis include a set of categories which could be explored empirically in future studies in this field.

This theoretical argument demonstrates the striking modernity of Montessori pedagogy and of her ideas about learning, which have been anchored not only in her patient observation of the child, but also and foremost in her pedagogic practice.

The teaching experience is Montessori’s starting point, practical applications are the end, scientific experiments are the means, in a praxis-to-praxis model which is unique to other educational thinkers.

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New members

THE NETHERLANDS

Westra-Mattijssen, Els

From 1961 until now Els Westra works in Montessori education. She started as a Montessori teacher in Kindergarten and primary school, worked later as a Montessori teacher trainer at the Hogeschool Leiden and now as a senior trainer all over in Europe.

In 1985 she doctorate to become drs. in Pedagogic at the University of Utrecht and after that she acquired a post-doctoral qualification as a psychologist at the University of Leiden. Specialities are developmental psychology, neurophysiology and psychopathology.

Her research interest at this moment is how to upgrade the quality of Montessori education in general, and especially in the Netherlands, to a level that is in tune with the requirements of the 21e century and to develop instruments to support that goal.

At this we focus on didactics, mathematics and methodology. Several articles are written; the most important one is translated in English and German.

One of the instruments Els developed is The Montessori Child Monitoring System (MCMS for ages from 2 to 12 years) as a portfolio for teachers and a portfolio for children. In the Netherlands is a group of specialists who support schools to implement both instruments in schools. By using valid systems based on goal orientated observations and registrations by teachers, the so called formative and process evaluation, we show how children learn, which moments of development are special, how the child develops as a person and how each child reaches the personal maximum in school education.

Another project and research she is involved in is "The role of the teacher in the process of mathematical development of children".

Contact: e.westra.mattijssen@hetnet.nl

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Editorial board

Clara Tornar, Monica Salassa
University of Roma Tre
Department for Educational Project
Centre for Montessori Studies
csm@uniroma3.it, www.montessori.uniroma3.it

In this issue, Montessori Farm School pictures courtesy of Bodil Cronquist