Unleashing Children’s Creativity, Passions and Purpose

Montessori for Now and the Future
The Montessori Vision Begins in the Spiritual Embryo

Maria Montessori said...

• “When we leave the child to develop, we leave him to build up the adult man from the invisible roots of creation.”

The Absorbent Mind
The Spiritual Embryo Contains the Blueprint for each Child

Maria wrote...

“When a new being comes into existence, it contains within itself mysterious guiding principles which will be the source of its work, character, and adaptation to its surroundings.”

The Secret of Childhood
Inside that blueprint lies the seeds of each child’s creativity, passions and purpose.

• As Maria reminds us, however, “…the newborn child does not possess developed psychic faculties, because he has yet to create them.”

The Absorbent Mind
Therefore, she says, “the Montessori teacher needs to see the child who is not there yet.”

What does that mean?
We must provide an environment that facilitates each child’s inner construction... ALL OF IT

• Not just the child before us, but the complete being they will bring out into the world

• That includes their creativity, passions and purpose
This is how:

1. Shift focus: Look for Creative Intelligences
2. Discover Active interests
3. Develop Passionate themes
4. Integrate PASSION into learning
5. Anchor BRILLIANCE into the world
Step 1. Shift focus

• Look for *how* each child naturally creates
Everything the Montessori child does is creative because it involves “doing”

- That means a Montessori education is uniquely positioned to find each child’s individual creativity, passion and purpose
Creativity encompasses more than the arts:

• Creating new concepts and philosophies
• Problem-solving
• Building new forms
• Connecting people, ideas, materials and processes in new ways

• Inventing, innovating and experimenting
Each child creates through their own particular combination of dominant creative intelligences.
Eight Creative Intelligences
(Harvard Research by Howard Gardner)

- Linguistic
- Logical/Mathematical
- Bodily/Kinesthetic
- Musical
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Spatial
- Naturalist
What is a creative intelligence?

• A creative intelligence is how children organize information to create
What do the creative intelligences have to do with Montessori?

Answer:

• The didactic materials are already in alignment with the creative intelligences.
Knowing how the intelligences overlap with the didactic materials is crucial:

• It helps us better provide what each child needs to develop their own particular innate creativity
Why is this important?
When children use their natural intelligences to create, they connect to the plan inside the spiritual embryo.

- They find their:
  - Gifts
  - Passions
  - Purpose
This is what the creative intelligences look like:
A Linguistically-Intelligent Child:

• Creates through words
Early signs include:

- Babbling or talking incessantly
- Playing with sounds to mimic syllables
- Playing with words
- Mimicking rhymes
- Arguing persuasively and articulately
The child may:

• Talk to themselves
• Make up stories
• Tell jokes
• Want to read or be read to
And move to:

• Blogging interests, ideas, daily events
• Journaling experiences, thoughts, inspirations
• Creating riddles, rhymes, rap songs, lyrics, puns, wordplay
• Writing plays
• Improvising skits
Activities to develop linguistic creativity:

- Record stories
- Turn nonsense words into puns
- Journal thoughts and experiences into books
- Turn babble into poetry...rhymes, haiku or free form poems
- Make up foreign languages
- Turn incessant talking or joke-telling into podcasts
A Logical/Mathematically Intelligent Child:

- Has an analytical mind...
- Identifies patterns
- Weighs similarities and differences
Early signs include:

• Sorting and organizing materials into sizes, shapes, colors, categories, functions
• Counting everything
• Likes puzzles

• blocks/shapes/rings
• cars/trucks/trains
• material bins
• play dough colors
• keeps foods separate
The child may:

- Categorize events or objects by purpose:
  - Chairs and couches are for sitting
  - Step stools are for standing
  - Library time is for reading

- Organize time by routine:
  - Wash hands before eating
  - Dress before playing
  - Bath before bedtime

- Rates experience by emotional response:
  - yummy/yucky
  - happy/sad
  - good/bad
  - fun/boring
  - hard/easy
  - nice/mean
And move to:

• Analyzing and rating:
  • Videos
  • DVDs
  • Music/musicians
  • Computer files
  • Movies/actors
  • Sport players and teams

• Solving complex problems through:
  • Programming Computers
  • Creating Apps or Video Games
  • Mathematics
Activities to develop logical/mathematical creativity:

• Play chess
• Create logic puzzles
• Design organizational systems: DVD’s, music, books, class activities
• Manage a calendar
• Create a blog and post rating of favorite interests
• Plan a budget
A Bodily/Kinesthetic-Intelligent Child:

- Has a physical orientation and creates through using their body
Early signs include:

• Expressing excitement through arms and legs
• Using hands with dexterity:
  • picks up cereal one piece at a time
  • manipulates dials
  • pushes buttons
  • pulls levers
  • turns door knobs

• Exploring and pushing physical limits:
  - early sitter/crawler/walker
  - climbs, jumps, touches
The child may:

- Be constantly on the move
- Tinker with everything
- Act out with whole body
  - Overly dramatic/expressive with body, limbs, facial expression
  - Postures in strange configurations
  - Makes odd faces
And move to:

• Demonstrating increased physical prowess in team or individual sports
• Using body for artistic expression such as dance or drama
• Creating finely executed crafts
• Building anything from small to large structures
Activities to develop bodily-kinesthetic creativity:

- Group sports
- Individual physical activities
  - ice skating — bike riding
  - horseback riding — martial arts
- Large motor building
- Small motor building
  - models — handicrafts
- Physical Expression
  - acting — miming — dancing
A Musically-Intelligent Child:

- Has an affinity for any aspect of music
  - rhythm
  - beat
  - tone
  - pitch
  - timber
  - melody
  - lyrics
  - rap
Early signs include:

- Responding to music
  - calms to lullabies
  - excites to upbeat melodies

- Expressing to music
  - Bops to a beat
  - Dances

- Creating with sound
  - hums to self
  - plays with sounds
  - repeats songs
The child may:

- Drum or tap
- Whistle
- Uses objects to make sound
  - water glasses
  - silverware
- Sing
- Dance
- Karaoke
- Listens to music
- Communicate by singing

- Experiment with instruments
And move to:

• Writing lyrics
• Composing music
• Creating music through a computer
  • sampling
  • mashing
  • mixing songs
• Rapping
Activities to develop musical creativity:

• Make up songs or lyrics to music
• Compose and record own music
• Play an instrument or drum
• Create original songs and record
• D.J. at parties or dances
• Learn a repertoire of songs and recreate
An Interpersonally-Intelligent Child:

• Is adept at being social...reads people well
Early signs include:

- Asking for human contact and interaction:
  - reaches out to be held by many people
  - would rather be carried than in stroller
- Expressing physical display of emotion:
  - kisses, hugs, lays head on shoulder

- Wanting not to be alone
The child may:

- Interact with children of all ages well
- Interact with adults well
- Need BFF and personal attention
- Enjoy being in large groups even with minimal interaction
- Express desire to help others
And move to:

- Reading social cues well
- Showing concern for people’s feelings
- Developing long-term high-quality relationships
- Demonstrating leadership with peers
Activities to develop interpersonal creativity:

• Find a leadership role
• Participate in a drama or puppet group
• Volunteer for a charitable organization
• Take the lead in organizing a group around an activity or project
An Intrapersonal-Intelligent Child

- Demonstrates a high degree of self-exploration and self-awareness
Early signs include:

- Self-reflecting: reviewing own thoughts, feelings, relationships and actions

- Self-regulating: watching feelings and trying to control actions and responses
The child may:

- Set personal goals
- Self-evaluate thoughts, feelings and interactions
- Self-correct behavior
- Look toward the future
And move to expressing themselves through other creative intelligences

- Writing
- Dancing
- Composing
- Handicrafting
- Sculpting
- Singing
- Performing
- Podcasting
- Photographing
- Filming
Activities to develop intrapersonal creativity:

- **Set personal goals:**
  - physical activity
  - health
  - academic achievement
  - projects

- **Linguistic intelligence:**
  - journal
  - blog
  - write poetry

- **Spatial intelligence:**
  - paint
  - draw
  - sculpt
  - build
  - puppeteer

- **Music intelligence:**
  - play instruments
  - compose
  - write lyrics

- **Bodily kinesthetic intelligence:**
  - dance
  - mime /drama
  - gymnastic routines
  - karate demos
A Spatially-Intelligent Child

• Creates through two and three dimensions
Early signs include:

- Stacks and sculpts found materials
  - Sculpts the food on their plate: makes images out of mashed potatoes, arranges peas in design, stacks food
  - Creates structures out of piling rocks, twigs and other found material
  - Highly engaged building with blocks

- Physically exploring spaces
- Experimenting with color, line, shape, texture, form
- Building or stacking materials
The child may create in 2D:

- Doodle or scribble on everything
  - walls, paper, floors, bathroom tile, tables, doors, clothes and box lids using anything: crayons, pencils, markers, pens, bath pastels, sidewalk chalk

- Sticker everything—windows, car seat, furniture

- Finger paint with food, soap, mud, shaving cream
And move to:

• Filming movies
• Taking photographs
• Drawing or illustrating
• Painting with brushes on cardboard, canvas, paper bags, fabric, clothes
• Doing stamp art
• Creating computer graphics
• Designing anything
The child may create in 3D:

• Build forts or playhouses indoors or outdoors
• Make roads and cities in dirt, mud or snow
• Design contraptions
• Sculpt snowmen or sandcastles

• Construct models
And move to:

- Designing spaces, architecture, landscape, interior design, objects or clothing
- Building complex models and other 3-dimensional forms
- Exploring skilled crafts, batik, print screening, weaving, needlepoint
Activities to develop spatial creativity:

• Create, sculpt or carve:
  • decoupage, paper mache, beads, nuts and bolts, wire, twigs, wood, leaves, rope, clay

• Craft:
  • batiks, print screening, weaving, needlepoint

• Weld, blacksmith

• Design computer graphics

• Construct models

• Draft and build

• Draw and paint
A Naturalistic-Intelligent Child:

- Is interested in natural phenomena and working with natural elements.
Early signs may include:

- Experimenting with anything
- Liking cooking
- Loving animals
- Engaging with natural phenomena
- Feeling better being or working outside
The child may be drawn to:

- Stars and night sky
- Weather patterns
- Growing plants
- Animals
- Birds
- Bugs
- Pets
- Rocks/minerals/elements
- Trees
- Food preparation
- Any physical, life or earth science
And start:

- Creating concoctions with table salt, pepper, sugar, spices
- Mixing, stirring, measuring, experimenting with perfume, shampoo or twigs, flowers, dirt
- Collecting rocks, seashells, twigs, leaves, bugs
- Dissecting flowers, plants and dead bugs
And move to:

- Creating new food combinations
- Rigging pulleys, catapults, and balances
- Experimenting with growing plants
- Tracking weather
Activities to develop a naturalist creativity:

• Experiment through earth, life or physical sciences
• Create contraptions (Maker Faire)
• Train and care for animals
• Garden—plant, water, weed
• Cook, bake, invent recipes
• Collect anything natural
• Create with found materials
8 Creative Intelligences:

- Linguistic
- Logical/Mathematical
- Bodily/Kinesthetic
- Musical
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Spatial
- Naturalist

Providing an environment that helps each child develop their dominant creative intelligences helps children:

- Discover ‘who they are’ and ‘why they are here’
- Find meaning, direction and purpose
To Unleash Children’s Creativity, Passions and Purpose:

1. Shift focus: Look for Creative Intelligences
2. Discover Active Interests
Step 2: Discover Active Interests
Maria explains, “How can we force the child to be interested when interest can only arise from within?”

To Educate the Human Potential
The truth is:

• Not all interests are created equal...

• Only an ACTIVE INTEREST focuses the child’s attention and ignites passion
There are the four types of interests:

- Active
- Passive
- False
- Misdirected
Active Interest

• Self-motivated
• Internally directed
• Fuels creative intelligences

• Shows the beginnings of passion
Passive Interest

• Leaves clues to passion
• Is not identified as a valuable interest
• Is never developed

• Default activity the child does in between everything else
False Interest

- Child claims to love, but rarely initiates

- Motivated by what someone else wants
Misdirected Interest

• Looks like an active interest, but has an addictive quality

• May not be in the child’s best interest
• Discerning the differences for each child...

helps us provide an environment...

that better supports their interests and passions
To Unleash Children’s Creativity, Passions and Purpose:

1. Shift focus: Look for Creative Intelligences
2. Discover Active Interests
3. Develop Passionate Themes
Step 3: Develop Each Child’s Passionate Theme
Look for what polarizes the child’s attention...

Maria says:

- “Each time a polarization of attention takes place, the child begins to be completely transformed...
- to become calmer, more intelligent and more expansive...
- the child shows extraordinary spiritual qualities, recalling the phenomena of a higher consciousness....”

Spontaneous Activity in Education

- This is how you know they are on the right path
Passion tends to coalesce around a theme:

- A theme is a unifying idea or process
• A passionate theme can be a subject, category, process or behavior.
Subjects or categories:

Examples:

- Art
- Agriculture
- Business
- Computer Sciences
- Chemistry
- Ecology
- History
- Journalism

- Math
- Media
- Meteorology
- Music
- Psychology
- Performing Arts
- Sports
- Zoology
Processes or behaviors:

- Assembling
- Constructing
- Designing
- Engineering
- Experimenting
- Helping
- Imagining

- Inventing
- Organizing
- Producing
- Setting up
- Team building
- Training

- Can cross through a number of categories
Provide an opportunity for each child to immerse themselves in more specialized experiences within their theme(s)
For Instance: Building in 3D

- Building
- Furniture making
- Making tables
- Carving tables
- Architectural adornments

  furniture making
  making tables
  carving table tops
  architectural adornments
  business
Why find passion?

• A well-developed passion leads to meaning, direction and purpose
To Unleash Children’s Creativity, Passions and Purpose:

1. Shift focus: Look for Creative Intelligences
2. Discover Active Interests
3. Develop Passionate Themes
4. Integrate Passion into the Learning Environment
Step 4: Integrate Passion into the Montessori environment through how each child creates
Maria reminds us:

• “Children show a great attachment to the abstract subjects when they arrive at them through manual activity.”
Maria wants us to know:

• “Our aim...is not merely to make the child understand...but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.”

To Educate the Human Potential
We reach that core through integrating the child’s particular combination of creative intelligences into their learning activities.

• When children use their natural intelligences to create... they connect to the plan inside the spiritual embryo.
Linguistic Intelligence & Science

- Creative Passion: Story writing
- Science: Learning Activity

- Research a scientific topic and write down findings in a journal in narrative form as if it were their own experience
Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence & Social Studies

• Creative Passion: Building
• Social Studies: Learning Activity

• Research history of the Industrial Revolution; build an assembly-line to produce a product
Spatial Intelligence & Language Arts

• Creative Passion: Drawing and painting
• Language Arts: Learning Activity

• Create a story and present in storyboard form using pictures and text
Naturalist Intelligence & Math

• Creative Passion: Working with plants
• Math: Learning Activity

• Plan a garden and calculate:
  • cubic feet of soil
  • amount of plants per square feet
  • quantity of water needed per plant per week
To Unleash Children’s Creativity, Passions and Purpose:

1. Shift focus: Look for Creative Intelligences
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4. Integrate PASSION into learning
5. Anchor BRILLIANCE into the world
Step 5: Anchor Brilliance into the World
The time for them is now... Maria writes:

- “Our pupils are equipped in their whole being for the adventure of life, accustomed to the free exercise of will and judgment, illuminated by imagination and enthusiasm.”

To Educate the Human Potential
Bringing brilliance into the world may look like:

1. Tangible product
2. Social media
3. Hobby club
4. Local events
5. Mentor
6. Internship
7. Entrepreneurial activities
Why is it important?
If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it... does it make a sound?
Likewise, if our children express their creativity and brilliance and no one ever sees it, have their passions and gifts made a difference...and to whom?

- What does that mean to the child?
Bringing their brilliance into the world helps children find meaning, purpose and calling
Brilliance encompasses a quality of *being*
When we anchor our children’s brilliance into the world, they become more...

• Open
• Energized
• Self confident
• Compassionate
• Kind
• Creative

...because they are connected to their innate authenticity and the plan in the Spiritual Embryo
They step forward knowing:

- Who they are
- Why they are here
- How they can create in this world

- They find meaning, purpose and direction
Maria Montessori calls on us to continue to experiment and discover something new

• “Moreover, the method...[discovered] in the Casa de Bambini offers, it seems to me, an experimental field for the study of man, and promises, perhaps, the development of a science that shall disclose other secrets of nature.”

Maria Montessori—Rome, 1912

The Montessori Method
Montessori and a Passion Oriented Education™...

...that explicitly seeks children’s creativity and passions will graduate thinkers, creators, artists, engineers, entrepreneurs, scientists, explorers and peace makers...

John: Age 5
...human beings with the passion to pursue fulfilling, energetic lives of brilliance in a world of possibilities

John: Age 45
Passion Oriented Education™

Finding Creativity, Passion and Purpose

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