

Advanced Montessori Workshops

Mark Powell • markingrampowell@gmail.com • 0447 727 731



Positive Discipline Parenting

Target Audience: parents; educators of all levels; school administrators

Length: six 2½ hour sessions OR 15 hours over two full days

Short Description:

Want to gain the cooperation of your child without the power struggles? Do you need better strategies for those moments when yelling feels like the only thing that works? Learn how to rebuild respectful and encouraging relationships with your child using the renowned Positive Discipline Parenting Tools in this fun, interactive course.

Detailed Description:

Positive Discipline is a program designed to teach young people the skills they need to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. Based on the best-selling Positive Discipline books by Dr Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott and others, this approach teaches important social and life skills in ways that seek to restore the connection that children ultimately seek. Jane Nelsen writes that “a misbehaving child is a discouraged child.” Children are hardwired from birth to connect with others; children who feel a sense of connection to their community, family and school are less likely to misbehave. Effective discipline that allows children to learn necessary social and life skills must help children feel a sense of connection, belonging and significance. It must be mutually respectful and encouraging (kind and firm at the same time). To be effective over the long term it must consider what the child is thinking, feeling, learning and deciding about himself and his world. It must teach respect, concern for others, problem-solving and cooperation. And it must invite children to discover how capable they are by encouraging the constructive use of their personal power and autonomy. The Positive Discipline Approach is used in Montessori schools throughout the United States because its principles are deeply consistent with Montessori principles. The presenter has been certified by Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott in the US and has facilitated many courses to dozens of parents.

Goals and Outcomes:

In this enjoyable, hands-on course, parents and educators will come away with a cache of 52 tools and strategies for gaining the cooperation of children in situations that typically produce conflict between adults and children. Adult carers will learn the four Mistaken Goals that lead children to misbehave and how to counter them with words and actions that promote connection and cooperation. Participants will receive a certificate from the Positive Discipline Association.

How Does Montessori Teach Writing and Reading?

Target Audience: parents; educators of 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds; Montessori administrators

Length: 2½ hours

Short Description:

This 2½ hour interactive workshop will present an overview of the Montessori language curriculum for children 3 through 18 years. It will cover the all-important question of how children learn to read in their early years and the first three years of school. It will also include a presentation of the fourth cosmic Great Story about the development of written communication. Literacy doesn't stop there of course, so the presentation will also cover language development for 9-12 year-olds and adolescents. The workshop will vary in its emphases for audiences of parents or educators.

Detailed Description:

Learning to read and write is often a source of anxiety for both children and their parents. The process of becoming literate is still not completely understood by scholars and trends in literacy instruction have ebbed and flowed over the decades in English-speaking countries. There is often variation among traditional school systems and even between classrooms in the same school! On the other hand, Montessori schools have had a very consistent approach to teaching writing and reading for over a century, an approach anchored in the scientific observations and experimentation of Dr Montessori. This workshop begins by putting participants in the place of the young child learning to read by having them learn to read an alphabet of invented symbols. Once participants understand how the pre-literate child feels when confronted with an unfamiliar script, they are in a better position to appreciate the foundations that are laid in sensory development in the early years all the way through literacy instruction in the upper years. This workshop will demystify questions such as why learning to write precedes learning to read in Montessori classrooms, the reverse of how literacy is taught in traditional classrooms. It will also include a full presentation of the fourth Great Story about the development of written communication throughout history. For an audience of parents the focus will be on the child's experience and on how to reinforce literacy development at home. For an audience of educators the emphasis will be on tips, strategies and best practice materials gleaned from the presenter's experience of more than a quarter century teaching literacy to 6-12 year-olds in the United States and Australia.

Goals and Outcomes:

Parent participants will come away with a good understanding of how children learn to write and read in Montessori classrooms and how best to nurture their budding literacy at home. For Montessori educators this workshop serves as a comprehensive review of the many steps and strands in the process of teaching literacy. The presenter will share tips, strategies and best practices gleaned from more than 25 years teaching literacy to 6-12 year-olds.

Technology in the 21st Century Classroom

Target Audience: educators of 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds; administrators

Length: 3 hours

Short Description:

Montessorians on the whole sometimes discount the importance of technology. This three-hour workshop looks in detail at how the world has changed under globalization, how children are changing, the new demands of the 21st century workplace, and the important contributions that technology can make – that no other material can make – in a Montessori classroom.

Detailed Description:

This workshop will explore the ways that technology has changed childhood and the characteristics of the Net Generation, the latest generation to come of age and the first to grow up with digital technology and the Internet. It will also look at the changing nature of the world economy since Globalization 3.0, as described by Thomas Friedman, among others. It will then give a little history of the Internet and some background, and then look at what technology has to offer Montessori 6-9 and 9-12 classrooms that no pre-digital material has to offer. The workshop will also anonymously survey the audience for an indication of how technology is embraced in their school and what their comfort level is with digital technology. The question will be asked why it is that Montessorians typically have not embraced technology very readily. Materials will include examples of types of websites useful for 6-12 and adolescent students, and ways of integrating technology skills into the curriculum without having to teach it as a stand-alone subject. The premise of the workshop is that technology for its own sake is a waste of precious time and resources in the classroom, and that digital tools are practical life opportunities that can bring the world more easily into the classroom when “going out” is not convenient or possible. Without technology in our classrooms, children will increasingly experience their environments as detached from their lives.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants who had previously seen digital devices as a negative influence on the lives of modern children will leave this workshop with a more nuanced understanding of the opportunities offered by technology and the Internet. They will begin to see how important technology is for the 21st century Montessori classrooms. They will walk away with some specific ways that technology can be implemented seamlessly into the classroom environment without the need for specialists and a huge investment in the latest equipment.

Using Digital Technology to Engage Learners

Target Audience: educators of 6-9, 9-12 and 12-15 year-olds; administrators

Length: 2 hours

Short Description:

This two-hour workshop addresses how digital technologies can be used in practice to engage (rather than distract) 6-12 year-old and adolescent students in Montessori (and traditional) classrooms. Digital technologies are inherently customizable and interactive, and they have blurred the distinction between producers and consumers in the Information Age. When teachers understand the strengths and limitations of these devices they can shape learning experiences that promote autonomy, authenticity, connection and inquiry.

Detailed Description:

Our students are products of the Information Age, an era where the entire opus of human knowledge can be accessed by anyone with a smartphone, tablet or Internet-connected computer. The Internet has changed the old relationships between the producers of knowledge (highly paid and often cloistered scholars, authors and researchers) and consumers (the rest of us) by providing a platform where anyone can publish easily. Excluding digital technologies from the Montessori elementary or adolescent environments, or relegating computers to the periphery simply because they weren't among Dr. Montessori's repertoire of materials, ignores the reality that the Internet is now part of the air most of our students breathe when they are not in the classroom. When the potential and limitations of digital technologies are understood, they can make teachers' lives easier and help facilitate experiences that engage students for the same reasons that traditional Montessori materials have for over a century. Children are engaged with activities that respect their autonomy, that are authentic because they matter, that connect them with other individuals or with causes or institutions greater than themselves, and which invite inquiry into intriguing questions or problems. Digital tools and the Internet offer almost inexhaustible opportunities for bringing Montessori 9-12 and adolescent classrooms into the 21st Century without compromising the child-centered principles and methods that are at its core. This workshop will give specific examples of ways that digital technology can enhance Montessori classrooms without distracting children from other hands-on materials that have served Montessori students well for over a century.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will be invited to consider some broad characteristics that make Montessori classrooms engaging for children. After an audiovisual tour of some very specific ways in which digital technologies can enhance these characteristics without detracting from our core method, participants will be inspired to integrate technology into their 6-12 and adolescent classrooms to engage and motivate their young "digital natives."

Digital Storytelling

Target Audience: educators of 6-9, 9-12 and 12-15 year-olds

Length: 3 hours to 3 days, depending on the depth participants prefer

Short Description:

This workshop will walk participants through the process of creating their own three-minute digital story. Participants will be required to bring their own laptop computer installed with *Adobe Premiere Elements* (Mac or Windows). Participants in the longer workshop will be asked to come with some concrete ideas for a script and roughly 15-20 digital photos relating to their story idea.

Detailed Description:

Computer instruction in Montessori elementary classrooms is too often relegated to word processing, Keynote presentations and searching the Internet. However there are many areas in which digital technology can help modernize the Montessori curriculum in ways that no traditional manipulative can. One of the most engaging and relevant integrates the traditional writing process with the new digital literacy skills in the emerging genre of digital storytelling. Being able to tell one's own story, whatever that story may be, in a multimedia platform is increasingly becoming the new definition of literacy in the 21st Century information economy where every student carries around a smartphone capable of video capture and voice recording. Participants in this hands-on workshop will learn to create a two- to three-minute digital story using the inexpensive and easily accessible application, *Adobe Premiere Elements* (for Mac or Windows platform). This project involves the writing and recording of a voiceover script using *Audacity*, scanning and manipulating digital images using *Photos* or *GIMP* and the creation of background music using *GarageBand* or downloading of an appropriate track from various production music sites on the Internet. These three elements are then combined into a 2-3 minute digital story. In the 3-hour version, participants will be given the various elements of a digital story (images, voiceover and background music) and shown how to assemble it in *Adobe Premiere*. In the more in-depth 3-day workshop each participant will create a completely original video from scratch based on a topic of personal interest.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will come away with their own short digital story and the skills to repeat the process with 6-12 year-old or adolescent students in classrooms equipped with appropriate hardware and the relevant software.

Sheep, Cat or Wolf?

What's Your Teaching/Parenting Style?

Target Audience: parents; educators of 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds; Montessori administrators

Length: 2 hours

Short Description:

This two-hour hands-on workshop encourages teachers, parents and administrators to experience, and reflect on, three different teaching styles that are traced back to the three broad trends in contemporary educational philosophy: behaviourism, progressive romanticism, and interactionism. Participants will appreciate in a very visceral way how the Montessori approach differs to other methods of education.

Detailed Description:

Participants will be divided playfully into three groups. Each group will be given the same goal – to explore the concept of Platonic Solids. However the groups will be given different parameters that correspond to the teaching methods or philosophies of the three main approaches to schooling dominant in the industrialized and developing world: behaviorism (traditional schools); romantic-progressivism (Homeschooling or “free schools” such as the Summer Hill or Sudbury Valley models); and interactionism (constructivism and Montessori schools). Each group will get the same materials: toothpicks and jelly candies with which to complete their group's directive. After this hands-on experience the groups will combine again to debrief their experiences, and to brainstorm the assumptions of each of the different approaches to educating children. These assumptions will be fleshed out with some background information on each of these philosophical approaches to education. In the section on interactionism, constructivism will be contrasted with the Montessori approach. The workshop will conclude with an overview of five principles of good interactionist teaching and parenting. Parents will be able to reflect more widely on their parenting practices and also about what they see in their child's classroom. Within Montessori classrooms, pedagogical practice can vary widely on a spectrum from more traditional and structured to more open and spontaneous depending on the personality and training of the guide. With an audience of teachers emphasis will be placed more on elements of practice that distinguish the Montessori approach to help them reflect more articulately about their own classroom practice.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will come away with an impressionistic, practically informed, experiential sense of the meaning of each of the three major philosophies of education in the world today. Parents will come away with a better appreciation of why their children love Montessori so much and why it's important that they mirror the same principles at home. This workshop will give participants a “big picture” of where Montessori fits in the world of education generally.

Choice and Motivation

Target Audience: educators of 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds; Montessori administrators

Length: 6 hours

Short Description:

A key component of early childhood Montessori classrooms, choice is sometimes seen as a luxury by Montessori teachers of 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds who often feel pressure to be accountable to parents and administrators with “measurable results.” This full-day hands-on workshop will model practical ways to structure the elementary classroom and design follow-up activities to promote autonomy, independence and joy in 6-12 year-old students.

Detailed Description:

In Montessori philosophy, choice is the engine of motivation, one of the prime elements in an educational structure designed to promote lifelong excitement about learning in children. But in many Cycle 2 and 3 Montessori classrooms, especially those in the public sector, choice is increasingly sacrificed to real or perceived pressures that teachers sometimes feel to produce fast results that can't be guaranteed when children are given the freedom to make decisions about their own learning. The first half of this workshop will be an interactive presentation on the importance of choice as the engine of motivation in Montessori pedagogy, the nature of second period work, and a how-to guide to structuring activity in 6-9 and 9-12 classrooms to promote autonomy and independent learning. Choice does not have to be an all-or-nothing condition, but is most effective in these Montessori environments when it is limited and structured. The afternoon hands-on session will apply the principles presented in the morning session to specific presentations across the 6-12 curriculum requested by workshop participants who registered at least two weeks in advance.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will come away with a list of practical ways that limited choice can be introduced into elementary Montessori classrooms, and a clearer philosophical understanding of why choice is necessary in classrooms whose primary goal is to encourage the development of independent and joyful learners.

Conflict Resolution Skills Through Games & Role Play

Target Audience: educators of 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds; Montessori administrators; a modified workshop is also available for Children House classrooms

Length: 3 hours

Short Description:

In this three-hour interactive workshop, participants will learn the basic concepts and skills of conflict resolution for either 3-6 or 6-12 year-old and adolescent classroom environments.

Detailed Description:

The social emotional curriculum in any classroom consists of teaching children to relate well as human beings. These skills are generally given little formal emphasis in Montessori training and don't appear anywhere on standardized tests. However, experienced teachers know that this hidden curriculum is in many ways as important – if not more so – than the academic curriculum. Without an atmosphere of safety and tolerance, children are preoccupied with their more basic questions – who their friends are, and where they belong. Socially stressed children are unwilling to take risks in their learning for fear that they will lose face in front of their peers, so they are less likely to be able to relax, make mistakes and get into that magical state of flow. Misbehavior is often nothing more than a child's lack of understanding of how to find belonging and significance, but it can also be due to a lack of understanding of the basic concepts and skills of peaceful communication. Without the understanding or skills to connect socially, children become discouraged in their attempt to connect to others. In a series of interactive, fun and engaging games and activities, participants will be introduced to a set of concepts and skills that can provide teachers and students with a basic vocabulary with which to talk about and resolve conflicts as they arise in the classroom. This set of activities follows closely the curriculum developed by *Educators for Social Responsibility* in Cambridge MA for the *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program* (contained in their two manuals *Connected and Respected Volumes 1 and 2*). Participants will be introduced to curriculum guides from this publisher that can provide more in-depth training for students in the practices of conflict resolution and peer mediation. Children who have more success in their social interactions experience a greater sense of connection and less social discouragement, and less discouragement means less misbehaviour. When teachers have to spend less time addressing misbehaviour they have more time to connect children with their learning. Research has shown again and again that children do better academically when they experience social success.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will come away with a series of user-friendly games and activities which they can use to teach the basic vocabulary and skills of conflict resolution needed to establish the foundations of a peaceable classroom. The full curriculum is contained in two manuals titled *Connected and Respected Volumes 1 and 2*, available from www.esrnational.org.

Cosmic Education & The Five Great Lessons

Target Audience: educators of 6-9 and 9-12 year-olds; Montessori administrators; parents

Length: 4 hours

Short Description:

The five Great Lessons make up the core of the 6-12 curriculum and are generally delivered in the first weeks of each new year. They are generally delivered as long stories performed by the teacher with charts and objects, so they can feel somewhat overwhelming for new teachers. In this three-hour workshop, participants will get background information and tips and tricks for making these big presentations more manageable and engaging for children and teachers alike.

Detailed Description:

In the first plane of development, children under six are given love and security as they are presented with facts about the world. Children of the second plane are developing a questioning intellect and a tremendous thirst for knowledge. They want to know the hows and whys of everything and are beginning to think of themselves in relation to the universe. They begin contemplating questions such as Why am I here? and Where do I belong? But the universe is so big and can seem overwhelming in all its spectacular detail. As the child transitions from the first to the second plane we present the universe as one whole unity through a series of stories that reveal the connections between all things that are part of the cosmos. The five Great Lessons or Stories are a crucial entry point into the “cosmic education” of the second plane by helping children orient themselves to the universe. The first Great Story presents the creation of the universe with grandeur and mystery from the Big Bang to the point where life is ready to begin. It presents the idea that all things follow their laws and introduces the child to not knowing everything. The second Great Lesson opens up biology with the story about the coming of life. It picks up where the first story left off, adding the new concept of interdependency. The third Great Story highlights the unique gifts that all humans have – our intellect, our big hearts and our hands. The story of the coming of human beings plants the seed that these gifts come with a great responsibility. The fourth Great Lesson is the story of written communication and the development of the alphabet. The final lesson is the story of numbers and the history of how writing quantity developed. These Great Stories should be presented early in the new year, or twice if new children enter the class in the spring. Many teachers find these stories somewhat overwhelming to present, but it doesn't take much to turn these stories into engaging performances. This workshop will provide background information to help teachers feel comfortable with the material, tips and tricks for making the stories more manageable as well as suggestions for adding mystery to engage children.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will come away with background knowledge about each of the Great Stories as well as useful tips and suggestions for how to turn this information into compelling stories. At least two of the stories will be modelled depending on time available.

Multiplication By Osmosis

Target Audience: 6-9 and 9-12 educators; Montessori administrators; parents

Length: 2 hours

Short Description:

Learning multiplication facts are often a cause of concern for parents, and their memorization in 6-9 is a gateway to the higher maths of the 9-12 classroom. In this two-hour workshop, participants will receive an overview of how multiplication is taught from the first plane up through adolescence.

Detailed Description:

Multiplication is in some ways a gateway in the Montessori maths curriculum between the more concrete, hands-on phase of the 3-6 and 6-9 classrooms to the more abstract, advanced maths concepts of the 9-12 and adolescent classrooms. Parents sometimes see the memorization of multiplication facts as a sign of how well their child is learning maths in their Montessori classroom. Children who enter Montessori classrooms later, without experience with the concrete manipulatives, may struggle to memorise their facts abstractly. This two-hour workshop looks at how multiplication is taught from Cycle 1 through Cycle 4 in several strands. Numeration and the concept of multiplication are learned with the bead chains and bead bars in 3-6 and 6-9, which leads into squaring in Cycle 3 and more advanced work with Powers of Numbers in Cycle 4. The memorization of simple multiplication facts is also learned in 3-6 with the Finger Charts, with special mention made of the commutative and distributive properties. Students who enter Montessori without experience with these materials often need more direct, rote methods and several of these (such as the clave rhythm) will be covered in the workshop. The operation of multiplication with large numbers is learned with materials that gradually introduce more abstraction, including the Stamp Game, Small and Large Bead Frames (the repeated addition model of multiplication), the Flat Bead Frame and the Checkerboard (which gives an area model of multiplication). This strand leads into Cross Multiplication in 9-12 and the studies of area and volume. The concepts of multiples and factors are introduced with the Multiples Tables in 6-9, and this leads to a study of prime numbers in 9-12. The whole multiplication table is introduced in 6-9 with the presentation of the Numerical Decanomial, which solidifies the child's grasp of their multiplication facts. The Decanomial is taken a step further in 9-12 with the introduction of algebraic terminology, and this leads into more advanced work with algebra in Cycle 4. As Dr Montessori said, using the hands is the fastest way to abstraction with conceptual understanding, and with these materials multiplication facts are learned almost by osmosis! The integration of maths with other subjects (such as history) will also be covered in this session.

Goals and Outcomes:

Participants will come away with an appreciation of the various ways that multiplication is woven into the Montessori maths curriculum. Parents will appreciate how the learning of multiplication facts is addressed in many varied ways with different manipulatives at various ages in the second plane in particular.

Syncing Home and Classroom

Target Audience: parents; educators of all levels; school administrators

Length: 1 hour

Short Description:

Montessori educators often put a lot of effort into having parents understand what and how their children are learning in the classroom. While these parent education efforts are important and useful, knowing how Montessori classrooms work doesn't necessarily help busy parents understand how to put those principles into practice in their own homes. This workshop introduces a practical, interactive program that will help parents use the core principles of Montessori to gain the cooperation and encourage the independence of their children in their day-to-day lives at home. It will have them lining up at the door for your parent information events!

Detailed Description:

Regular newsletters and parent education nights go a long way to helping parents understand what and how their child is learning in their Montessori classroom. Despite the effort many educators put into these, parents don't always make time to read newsletters and it's often the parents who are most disconnected from what's happening in the classroom who miss these parent education opportunities.

Parent education that is focused on the classroom doesn't necessarily help parents know how to encourage cooperation in their child while also empowering them and respecting their dignity. Most misbehavior—whether in the classroom or at home—has at its core adult modeling which has disrupted the child's sense of belonging and significance. Learning to understand and read the clues that children are giving us through their behaviour can help adults know what they need to do to re-establish the connection that encourages joyful cooperation and allows children to become confident, competent and contributing members of their communities.

The self-discipline that is required for children to function well in a Montessori environment is encouraged when educators are kind and firm at the same time and respect the dignity and independence of each child. This workshop presents an overview of four parenting styles and introduces *Positive Discipline*, a program designed to teach parents *authoritative* parenting skills that mirror these classroom principles. It will introduce parents to practical solutions which will help them teach their children skills that reinforce their Montessori experience and eliminate the potential for mixed messages.

Goals and Outcomes:

In this interactive introduction parents and educators will be introduced to a unique and powerful approach to parenting which can create greater consistency between how independence and cooperation are encouraged in the Montessori classroom and the child's experience at home. Participants will understand the four parenting styles and learn the key principles and tools that are explored in depth during the six session program. They will also come away with a sense of the uniquely interactive way this program is taught through role play and Socratic questioning.