



MONTESSORI INCLUSION CONFERENCE

Helping All Children Learn,
Communicate and be Understood
Well in the Montessori Classroom

**SATURDAY 12 & SUNDAY 13 JUNE 2021
BRISBANE AIRPORT CONFERENCE CENTRE**

A hybrid event format, combining an in-person
conference experience with optional virtual attendance

SCHEDULE



Saturday, 12 June 2021

8:00am - 8:30am

Registration & Exhibitors

8:30am - 8:45am

Conference Welcome

8:45am - 9:45am

Normalisation, Embodiment, and Neurobiological Differences

Prof. Laura Flores Shaw *

To see the whole child, we must have some understanding of normalisation, embodiment, and neurobiological differences and their entanglement with the environment. Recent research, however, shows that Montessori teachers and administrators lack agreement as to what normalisation actually is and how teachers should foster it; and within the research literature there is no one conceptualization of embodiment. Further adding to these issues, our understandings of normalisation and embodiment are likely influenced by cognitive science's dominant model of the brain -that of a sequential, information processor. This presentation brings these issues to light and provides an enactive approach to embodiment that can influence our views of normalisation, particularly with respect to neurobiological differences, and influence how we prepare educational environments.

9:45am - 10:30am

Helping Children Become the Leaders of Tomorrow

Gavin McCormack

The leaders of tomorrow lay dormant in the children of today. Academic excellence is important, but essential skills such as love, empathy, resilience and acceptance cannot be overlooked. In this heartfelt talk, Gavin McCormack adjusts our perspective of what the word 'education' truly means. He believes that for any child to reach their full potential, the school and home environment must work in harmony.

10:30am - 11:00am

Morning Tea & Exhibitors

11:00am - 12:00pm

Why Do They Lick the Pink Tower? Ferne van Zyl

Why do some children lick the pink tower? Is it just another form of exploration or a pre-programmed behaviour which is based on earlier experiences and how exploration was handled by the adults in their world? Every child is unique! We will discuss the development of sensory perception in the first three years of life and look at the various ways we as parents and educators help or hinder the journey through the environments we offer them.

12:00pm - 12:45pm

Using Reflective Development to Move Towards Best Practice

Elizabeth Goor

Elizabeth Goor will introduce the concept of Reflective Development by focusing on Montessori Quality, the four pillars of "Integrity Systems" required to support Authentic Practice in the classroom, the maturity grid of organisations undertaking quality improvement and a supportive program for schools and early childhood/long day care services.

12:45pm - 2:00pm

Lunch & Exhibitors

Saturday continued...

2:00pm - 2:45pm

Weaving Wellbeing, Culture and Belonging into the Child's World

Ranu James

To build a sense of belonging and wellbeing in children educators need to support the expression and development of cultural identity. Educators who respect and celebrate cultural diversity will naturally seek out and develop authentic, embedded, culturally rich experiences for all children. Their learning environments will be places where children can come together, share culture, develop cultural well-being, create community, and maintain links that support and develop the cultural fluency needed to walk in many worlds.

2:45pm - 3:30pm

WORKSHOP OPTIONS (Select one)

1. Inclusive Admissions Processes [Christine Harrison](#)

Many Montessori schools and centres operate on a very tight budget and need to keep student numbers at a level which enables them to continue operating, receive government funding and ensure they are open to students of all abilities. Natural student attrition coupled with the need to keep numbers at a sustainable level often leads to enrolling children without a Montessori background and/or with additional needs. Where does inclusion fit within the framework of a sustainable school that continues to offer authentic Montessori principles and practices? This workshop will discuss what inclusion means for Montessori school policies and procedures, in particular the admissions process.

2. Building Healthy Futures [Phillip Torres](#)

How we introduce food to children at a young age lays the foundations for the journey of a good relationship with health and nutrition as they move through their life. Phil Torres, Chef and Nutritionist from Building Futures Montessori, shares how the school, teachers, parents and children work together to make eating well part of the holistic curriculum of the Montessori environment.

3:30pm - 5:15pm

Movie Screening: *Let the Child Be the Guide*

Screening of the new movie *Let the Child Be the Guide*. In this documentary, director Alexandre Mourot set his camera up in a Children's House in the oldest Montessori school in France, where the children guided him throughout the whole school year, helping him to understand the magic of their autonomy and self-esteem [Duration 1hr 40mins]

Networking & Nibbles

Delegates are welcome to either watch the movie, in part or in whole, peruse the exhibitors' booths, or gather in the foyer area for networking and nibbles. Networking is the part of a live conference that many people have been looking forward to most! Take advantage of this time to make new contacts, follow up with a speaker about something that piqued your interest from their talk, or catch up with old friends or colleagues. Of course please adhere to prevailing social distancing guidelines so that we can all continue to enjoy opportunities for live events in future.

Conference Reception

Saturday 5:15pm - 9:30pm



Join us for socially-distanced socialising at the first Montessori conference after nearly 2 years!

We invite you to celebrate at our Conference Reception on the rooftop of the ibis hotel at the city's hottest new private rooftop venue, Sky Lounge. This top floor setting offers stunning views out to Moreton Bay, Brisbane CBD and beyond, as well as a front row seat to airline theatre as the day turns to evening.

Join us for drinks and canapes to network and socialise with your fellow colleagues and speakers.

To kick off the evening we're delighted to be joined by Brisbane Ukulele's community band, The Sublime Ukelectics. As the sun goes down, a live DJ will spin your favourite tunes!

We'll provide the gorgeous setting, food, drinks* and music. You bring the fun!



* 1hr beverage package included, followed by a cash bar



Sunday, 13 June 2021

8:30am - 8:45am

Arrival tea/coffee & Exhibitors

8:45am - 9:45am

Beyond Self-Regulation: Normalisation, Predictive Processing, and the Generative Mind [Dr. Steve Hughes](#) *

Many have commented on the similarities between Montessori's conceptualisation of Normalisation and the set of cognitive capabilities psychologists know as "executive functions." However, the phenomenon that Montessori described as "the single most important result of our work" also displays a diverse range of other positive attributes, all of which can be seen as reflecting both the Child's growing mastery and their delight at progressing in their task of self-construction. And what is being constructed? Montessori said the Child is constructing their personality. Today, a neuroscientist might say the child is constructing a "generative model of the world." No matter what you call it, the hot-off-the-presses research presented in this talk will shine a positive light on the natural way of learning found in the Montessori environment, and might just help the Montessori guide (parents, too!) better understand the nature of their task as an aid to life. Normalisation – in all of its attributes – will be seen as the manifestation of a brain that has come to understand the nature and operation of the world, and one that can be secure in its suitability to life.

9:45am - 10:30am

What to do With That Hunch! [Dr. Eva Nislev](#)

We have all experienced it – something is just not quite right but you can't put your finger on it. Our job as teachers and educators is not to diagnose and yet we say 'I will eat my hat if X isn't Y or Z'. Stop there. What if you are wrong? If we want to be professionals and authentic Montessori practitioners, we need to become observers, not ordinary observers – 'deep observers'. There is no quick fix for children who display atypical behaviours. However, there is a critical need for 'deep observations' to enable purposeful information to be gathered and articulated objectively. The trained specialist can then make an informed decision regarding the 'hunch' and provide families and educators a pathway to move forward with. This presentation will unpack 'deep observation' and the difference between that and documentation.

10:30am - 11:00am

Morning tea & Exhibitors

11:00am - 11:45am

Does Making Montessori More Inclusive Mean Making it Public? [Naomi Whitehead & Rebecca Grugan](#)

Traditional education is currently under the microscope across our country and governments are looking for solutions to meet the needs of the modern child. More than any other time in history – Montessori education has the opportunity to transform education as a whole through the public sector. Come and hear about how the growth in the Montessori Early Childhood sector is putting pressure on schools to change the ways the Australian National Curriculum is accessed by children and how we have been doing it in a Queensland primary school with amazing results.

11:45am - 12:30pm

Reflective Development for Educators [Elizabeth Goor](#)

Elizabeth Goor will help teachers to start an ongoing examination of Authentic Practice with a hands-on session where attendees contribute to prevention exercises as an activity of daily life.

12:30pm

Conference Closing

The conference concludes with a short performance from the Brisbane Montessori School children's choir

SPEAKERS



Prof Laura Flores Shaw *

Prof. Laura Flores Shaw, an Assistant Professor in the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, is extensively trained in family systems therapy and educational neuroscience. She also has direct experience as Head of School within an AMI based Montessori school framework. She instructs in the Mind, Brain, and Teaching Certificate and the Doctor of Education online programs. Dr. Shaw's work has focused on translating research from multiple areas of neuroscience, educational psychology, sustainability education, and family systems research into school design and classroom practice. She has particular interest and expertise in translating current applied and computational neuroscience research and applying large-scale dynamical systems frameworks to sociocultural contexts.



Elizabeth Goor

Elizabeth Goor has been involved in Montessori since 1986. Her early background was in Health Services Management; Planning, Research and Development; Quality Assurance; Adult Education and Wollongong Council Community Services in Respite/Aged Care, and as a dietitian/nutritionist. She was Elanora's first Head of School and was instrumental in the development of a school that started with one classroom to evolve into a school that offers all stages in Montessori education including the Adolescent program and the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Elizabeth has a Dietetics degree, a Masters in Health Planning, a Masters in Total Quality Management, a Diploma of Secondary Science Education, and a Certificate III in Early Childhood and was previously on the Montessori Australia Foundation board.



Rebecca Grugan

Rebecca Grugan is founder and Managing Director of I Am Montessori, a boutique, specialist company focusing on the Montessori method of Education and creating solutions for early learning in Australia (children 0 to 12). Rebecca has her own Early Learning centres in South East Queensland, and manages a number of centres across the country for different investment groups. She holds a Certificate in Modern Montessori, Diploma of Children's Services, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and Certificate II in Business Administration. Rebecca comes from a PR and Marketing background and has owned and operated multiple small businesses. She is extremely passionate about providing children with quality education and care using the Montessori method. She believes every child should have access to this way of learning.



Christine Harrison

Christine Harrison has been involved in Montessori education since 1985 and was Head of School at Canberra Montessori School for over 20 years. As well as educational leadership, Christine has a background in mediation, mentoring, conflict management and adult education. Christine has trained, coached and mentored mediators as Executive Director with the Conflict Resolution Service, Canberra, and has presented workshops for Montessori teachers and leaders on people skills, mentoring and communication. She was the founding President of Montessori Australia and is a senior consultant working with Montessori schools and childcare centres. Christine sits on the board of AMI. She co-developed the AMI Administrators Certificate Course and, as an AMI Administrator Trainer, runs these courses globally. She has presented at Montessori conferences in Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, China and the USA.

SPEAKERS



Dr Steve Hughes *

Dr. Steven Hughes is a paediatric neuropsychologist with over twenty years of professional experience. A long-term advocate for Montessori education (and a Montessori parent), he has spoken to groups all over the world about brain development, diagnosis and treatment of learning and attention problems, and environmental conditions (at home, school and work) that support the optimal growth of higher-order cognitive skills. Dr. Hughes spent over a decade on the faculty of the University of Minnesota Medical School and is past president of the American Academy of Pediatric Neuropsychology. Dr. Hughes was the founding chair of AMI's Global Research Committee and is currently a member of the AMI and AMS Research committees. He is based in Prague, Czech Republic.



Ranu James

Ranu James is a proud Papuan Australian woman who holds a M.Ed. in International Studies. She has been an educator for over 30 years, 19 of those years working with children, families and educators in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. Ranu is the Director and Cultural Consultant of her cultural consultancy business, Weaving Cultural Stories and has worked in many roles within the Education and Community Services sector including music and preschool teaching, managing teams, licensing and regulating Childcare Services, TAFE teaching, early childhood consultancy, inclusion support and resource development. Ranu also has over 20 years' experience as a facilitator, bringing together people to share knowledge and experience of culture, enabling them to develop culturally inclusive programs.



Gavin McCormack

Gavin McCormack is a trained Montessori teacher, children's author, teacher trainer, philanthropist and school principal. While working in the teaching profession for over twenty years, he has used his experience and training to understand what it means to truly educate with true intention. Initially trained as a mainstream primary school teacher, Gavin re-trained as a Montessori teacher where he found the understanding and experience that has inspired him to build several schools and teacher training centres in the Himalayan regions of Nepal. Gavin has trained teachers, parents and educational leaders across the world. His passion for educational reform, with a strong emphasis on Montessori within the home, has driven him to attempt to put these thoughts into words.



Eva Nislev

Dr. Eva Nislev's teaching background spans primary, early childhood, TAFE, university and Montessori. She currently lectures preservice teachers at a number of universities teaching child development, curriculum and pedagogy, inclusive and safe environments and The Arts and is the senior lecturer for Queensland for the Montessori Institute (3-6 years). Eva also runs Montessori Links, an education consultancy providing targeted workshops and mentoring to early childhood educators and organisations in the development of strategies, skills and confidence in supporting and guiding children with challenging needs. Eva holds a PhD, MEd (Early Childhood), Dip. Montessori Education 3-6 (MWEI), Montessori Education 6-9 (MWEI), Cert. Special Ed, Dip. Children's Services, and Cert IV Workplace Training and Assessment.

SPEAKERS



Phillip Torres

Phillip Torres is Chef / Nutritionist at Building Futures Montessori. His culinary adventure began as a school-based chef apprentice at 15 and was qualified at the age of 20 when he began working as a chef. For the last 13 years he has worked at places such as the Queensland Reds alongside their dieticians, Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art. Phillip holds a Certificate 3 and 4 in personal training. During his studies he discovered his interest in nutrition, including a passion for providing children with the knowledge of how to cook and prepare foods and the importance of food and health for them. He subsequently studied nutrition at university so that he could combine cooking with nutrition to educate others on how to cook nutritious food and inform them about the importance of good quality nutrition.



Ferne van Zyl

Ferne van Zyl holds an AMI 0-3 Diploma and for over a decade owned and operated Down Under 3, a Montessori based learning centre for babies and toddlers. She facilitated the hugely successful Faber and Mazlish parent workshops "How to Talk so Kids will Listen" and "Siblings without Rivalry" as well as developing a "Toileting Independence" workshop, earning her the nick-name "The Poo-Poo Guru". Ferne has provided training and support to families on setting up environments for independence, effective communication skills and practical strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour. She developed the Supporting Freedom and Self-Discipline workshop, a Toileting program consults to parents, early childhood educators and Montessori organisations in Australia, New Zealand and via zoom around the world.



Naomi Whitehead

Naomi Whitehead is Head of Montessori at Capalaba State College in Queensland. She has 15 years of educational experience, as class director, classroom assistant, special education, OSHC coordinator, NAPLAN coordinator as well as in curriculum planning, and policy writing. She trained through the North American Montessori Center, completing a Montessori Diploma in both 6-9 and 9-12. She also has a Bachelor of Education. Naomi is passionate about bringing Montessori education to the wider community through public education.

Speakers will present live in person, except those marked * who will appear remotely



VENUE & BOOKING DETAILS



From its unique vantage point overlooking the airport precinct and Moreton Bay, the Brisbane Airport Conference Centre provides ease of access to some of the city's hottest shopping, dining and entertainment destinations.

The ibis Brisbane Airport Hotel offers discounted accommodation for conference delegates for \$159 per night. Book using the online portal [here](#).

2 Dryandra Road, Brisbane Airport QLD 4008

BOOK FOR IN PERSON OR LIVE ONLINE ATTENDANCE

Member Non-member

\$594	\$655	Conference In Person Attendance
\$396	\$435	Conference Zoom Attendance

Group Bookings - 1 complimentary place per 5 booked

Zoom Fatigue? Miss networking with colleagues? Join us in person!

- Saturday full day conference including arrival tea/coffee, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea and networking.
- Saturday evening conference reception with food, drinks and entertainment.
- Sunday half day conference including arrival tea/coffee and morning tea.

Registrations close Friday, 4 June.

In the event of COVID restrictions, the event will be moved to fully online live and the fees adjusted accordingly.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK ONLINE](#)

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