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Community News

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A Matter of Motivation

A review of *Drive* by Daniel Pink

In *Drive*, written in 2009, Daniel Pink analyzes not only what motivates us, but what the most effective form of motivation is. For decades, scientific studies have been proving that extrinsic rewards are limited as a motivating factor for achievement and creativity. Recent trends in business models have been catching up to the scientific conclusions that intrinsic motivation is a much more powerful and productive form of motivation. Companies who allow employees autonomy in their work are finding tremendous results in employee contribution to production ideas and projects. Encouragement of ownership of one's work, respect for ideas, and providing work time to explore ideas is the breeding ground for creativity. In the realm of Google, this has produced such attributes as G-mail; or at 3M, personal choice work time produced the enormously successful Post-It Note.

Drive illustrates an evolution in the workplace model from the formerly popular, although still not out of existence, "stick and carrot" mentality. "Rewarding an activity will get you more of it. Punishing an activity will get you less of it." (p.34) Rewards and punishments are found to be limited and ultimately dampen productivity, "...many practices whose effectiveness we take for granted produce counter-intuitive results: They can give us less of what we want—and more of what we don't want." (p.35) Human beings are naturally wired for curiosity and a desire to learn; motivation that comes from within is going to propel an individual much farther than an extrinsic one. Think of a

child learning to talk or walk—he is not motivated by a parent's desire for him to talk or walk, this is purely an internal desire to develop. Offering a piece of candy to demonstrate the new ability to take steps might work once or twice, but the child will inevitably abandon the candy incentive when something of his own choosing captures his attention. The internal reward of "I did it," and how that propels an individual on to the next step perpetuates the goal, where an external reward may have the effect of an end goal and fail to inspire interest to explore beyond reaching the goal.

Pink continues his analysis by introducing the concept of 'flow.' Flow is the state of total focus and engagement in an activity; where an individual loses him/herself in the process of attempting to reach a goal. Extrinsic rewards can never propel a person to this point because in an activity where an individual attains flow "the goal is self-fulfilling; the activity is its own reward." (p. 113)

Grades are a form of extrinsic reward (or punishment). Grades force students to prove what they already know. In an environment of easy successes, people tend to choose easy targets that affirm their existing abilities, but do little to expand them. In this environment, a person who has to work hard gains a label of not being very good. By contrast, with a goal of learning, a student does not have to already be good at something to work toward the goal (of learning) and is naturally encouraged to continue to work toward mastery without the stigma of a performance goal.

This is the connection of Daniel Pink's *Drive* and the trend toward autonomous business models to Montessori education. Over 100 years ago Dr. Montessori presented the notions of:

autonomous education where a child's interests factor into his curriculum; the superior productivity of goals of mastery versus performance goals; uninterrupted work periods where children can achieve





A P P L E C L A S S



It is so fun to study Cultural subjects in a Montessori classroom. All three ages, 3-6 years, absorb the geography in different ways. A younger child may look at pictures of Asia, while one a little older will sort the pictures into categories like food and places of Asia. The oldest students read and label the same work and perhaps write a story of the picture. Here labels are happily matched to the animals of Asia.



L I L A C C L A S S



The Sensorial Area provides a strong foundation for the Montessori classroom. Here, children refine their senses and their ability to discriminate (size, length, weight, sounds, etc.). They often do all of this learning in the guise of “building blocks.” Extreme patience and fine motor control can be cultivated in this area.

Kindergarten

The kindergartners have made a smooth transition from the Linden Tree classroom to the Lilac classroom where they will spend their afternoons for the remainder of the school year.

Presently, much of the kindergartners’ afternoon time is being spent with swimming twice per week, and just recently an unprecedented hockey day (see activity photos on page 6). These physical education activities also serve to inspire independence and bonding amongst the children. For example, the bi-weekly excursion to and from The Summit for swimming involves managing the behavior expectations required for the trip,

L I N D E N



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The richness of the learning experience for your child depends on the number of senses and dimensions involved in the process. Montessori math materials are real, three-dimensional, multi-sensory objects instead of flat pictures in a book, or worse, just words and numbers to explain mathematical concepts. The Hundred Board has 100 squares and wooden tiles with the numerals 1-100. This material is used to teach children to count to 100 and to know how to sequence numbers 1-100.

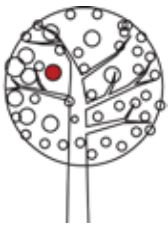
as well as practicing the time management skills necessary for dressing in a timely fashion, following another instructor's directions, etc., all independently from parents. This kind of exercise serves to inspire a great leap forward in the kindergartners' maturity, not to mention the physical strength and coordination benefits of the gross motor activities of swimming and skating.

The kindergartners continue to work in their morning classrooms as well as in the afternoons spent on campus, including beginning some fun and interesting science experiments. We look forward to continued growth both as individuals and as a group for the rest of the school year.

B I R C H C L A S S



The Early Learner classroom offers a variety of materials that happily engage the child in work and allow him/her to begin to understand the work cycle. This entails getting a work out, using it, then putting it away and cleaning up so that the work is ready for the next child. This begins to build a sense of responsibility and community in the classroom, and is a common thread throughout Montessori.



Elementary I

Motivation: When asked to think about the topic of motivation and what we could share of our students for the winter newsletter, the words “inspiration” and “modeling” came to mind. Impressionistic lessons are given by advisors, providing an overall fundamental bit of information, and each child has the freedom to take his/her own learning a step further. On a daily basis our students are able to make choices that lead to meaningful learning because they are asking questions inspired by their own interests. Often they are then asked to do some guided research to find answers to their inspirations. Students share their research, helping each presenter to better internalize his/her findings, and peers to supplement their learning. Peers inspire and model for each other. The ability to make decisions about one’s own learning inspires a desire and love for learning that is profound and life-long.

On a more specific note, students in Elementary I have been practicing goal setting by writing about their New Year resolutions. Goal setting is such an essential skill and process, and it enables students to reflect on themselves and what they are motivated to accomplish. Student responses to the question, “What can you work on this year in order to make yourself a better person,” were so thoughtful and intriguing! While we wish we could include them all, we have chosen a few samples to share with the community and hope you will read your child’s own work with him/her and encourage the process of goal-setting and self-reflection.



Our New Year Resolutions:

These are some things I promise to do this year. First, I will have a good attitude. I will not whine. I will be happy. Next, I will be thankful for what I have. I will not beg for more. I will always say thank you. Then, I will be nice. I will help others. I will greet them. Those are my New Year resolutions.

-Taylor Gray, 1st year student

Will you let me please tell you about my New Year resolutions? First, I will be nicer to animals. I will pick up trash and I will not set traps. Second, I want to go to New York. I will do my cute

face and I will save up money. Last, I will be nicer to insects. I will not squish them. Those are my New Year resolutions.

-Henry Smith, 2nd year student

Would you like to hear my New Year resolutions? These are my three best New Year resolutions. First, I will try to fight less with my brother. I will try not to take what he says so hard. Second, I will try to eat less bad food. Party cake is all right but I will have only one dessert per week. Now my last New Year resolution of the three ideas: I will play less video games. When I do video games, if there is a party and friend, I will try to play more of my usual amounts of game time. Thank you for letting me share some of my New Year resolutions with you.

-Zach Hong, 3rd year student





Elementary II

Motivation: Genuine learning in any educational setting is, of course, directly and strongly correlated with the individual student's interests. It certainly helps to have a truly interesting curriculum, but the real key is to integrate and facilitate that curriculum around the current needs and interests of each student in the environment. That may sound like a tall order, but it is actually far easier and far more natural than trying to hold the attention of an entire class through a steady diet of teacher directed content and scripted support activities. The Montessori curriculum is rich, integrated and sequenced throughout the years. The role of the teacher is to observe the individual child and facilitate for his or her ongoing and current needs and interests within that rich curriculum. We present The Big Picture and each child fills in the details of the woven tapestry in his or her own time and at an optimum individual pace. There is no real danger that the child will fail to acquire critical content. There is no race! Content is nice but incidental to lifetime learning skills, life skills and a love of learning. Everything that is covered in elementary school will come around again and again throughout the child's school career. The opportunity to develop a constructive and assertive love of learning is gone if the child doesn't establish it early in his or her academic career.

It is fundamental to the Montessori model and philosophy that motivation, self-discipline and reward must come from within the child. Children establish healthy self concepts and self-esteem when they are given the opportunity to make choices in a supportive, but judgment limited atmosphere. Being allowed to make choices about academics and to learn from mistakes without shame and labeling, enables a child to make accurate self assessments and to self-correct errors. If teachers dictate all academic content and drills without individual choice and then grade the performance, children grow up to be totally dependent upon grades and adult feedback. They simply will not make choices or lead as adults. Furthermore, a child who gets a C for his best efforts will learn quickly that he is a C person for life, while a precociously gifted child who gets an early A will have little reason to continue to challenge her or himself for the rest of the school years. So raise the bar high and do all you can do to help every child succeed according to his or her own measures. Most of those children will be A performers throughout life and very few of them will really need or care about outside evaluation. They will succeed and contribute because they care and know how to reward themselves!



Elementary II girls chose to revise "The Three Little Pigs" play and with a cast, presented the play at school and for open house. "We made it our own... We added our lines and our personalities."



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

After 30 years of Montessori, there's a lot to shout about...

Alumni Profile



Mariah Gladstone
Glacier High School

The following letter was received from Mariah's mother in December. It is wonderful to hear from the voice

of experience to confirm and validate the Montessori approach to education! Congratulations to Mariah; we can all look forward to seeing her in June at graduation!

Hi Sally, Katy and Montessori staff,

I just wanted to write and share some good news with you. We learned yesterday that Mariah has been accepted into Columbia! Not only is she graduating a year early (from Glacier High School), but she will also be heading off to New York City! We are all so excited and GRATEFUL for this amazing opportunity she will have.

In addition to sharing the news, I want to say THANK YOU to all the incredible staff at both Montessori campuses for all they did to nurture and mentor Mariah along the way!!! The seven years she spent at your school gave her the best foundation for life that any person could have. She learned to challenge herself, lead others, work independently, and most of all, set her sights high!

It truly takes a village to raise a good citizen. Mariah has a long way to go on her journey of growth and education, but Montessori has certainly played an important part in nurturing the confidence and citizenship in her thus far!

THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART!!

Linda Howard (Gladstone)

The Good Stuff... Winter-time activities



Kindergarten Hockey Day – a new adventure, requiring patience dressing in and wearing all of the protective gear and using skating skills learned in November and December. Lots of smiles and wonder as they

played in the snow.

Swimming takes the kindergartners to the other side of the spectrum climate-wise, but yields no fewer smiles getting comfortable in the water.

Trying new things and getting strong all add up to increased confidence!



Elementary 2 Overnight Field Trip to Loon Lake: Even though many of these students have known each other since the early childhood days, this recent overnight field trip created the opportunity for continued bonding. It was a chance to enjoy winter, indoors and

out, and interact outside the confines of school. The students enjoyed skating and hockey on the lake, ice fishing, some hiked to the neighboring lake, plus plenty of games and socializing in the lodge. It's OK to relax and enjoy one another's company!





Bulletin Board

- **KINDERGARTEN SWIM:**

Tuesday & Thursday afternoons through February 3rd.

- **ELEMENTARY PE:**

Friday afternoons through Feb. 25th (swimming through March 11th)

- **ALL MONTESSORI ICE SKATING PARTY:**

Saturday, 7:00 p.m. January 29th at Woodland Ice Rink. *Celebrate winter!*

- **WOODLAND VALENTINE PARTIES:**

Monday, February 14th in morning classrooms!

- **KME VALENTINE PARTIES:**

Monday afternoon, February 14th

- **NO SCHOOL - PRESIDENT'S DAY:**

Monday, February 21st. Woodland open for care for children up to 10 years old - watch for care reservation form.

- **MONTESSORI MAGIC (TALENT SHOW):**

Thursday, March 24th

- **SPRING BREAK:**

Early Dismissal Friday, March 25th, No School March 28-April 1st. Woodland open for care for children up to 10 years old - watch for care reservation form.

- **KME ELIZABETHAN FESTIVAL:**

Thursday, April 28th

- **ELEMENTARY 1 TO BIG CREEK:**

Tues-Wed, May 3-4

- **CARNIVAL:**

Thursday, May 12th at KME

- **ELEMENTARY 2 SPRING TRIP:**

Wed-Fri, May 18-20 (tentative)
Destination: Lewis & Clark Caverns, Museum of the Rockies (Bozeman)

MOTIVATION continued

flow; and intelligence as something that is not fixed, but something that can be improved through efforts to achieve mastery. Process over product is core to Montessori philosophy. This becomes even more relevant in a world where the big picture workplace is evolving faster than education can keep up. Much of what students learn today will be obsolete by the time they reach adulthood. "This era doesn't call for better management. It calls for a renaissance of self-direction." (p. 92) Self-direction is a fundamental aspiration for every child in Montessori.

Drive is a simply-written book that applies to both business and education. It meshes seamlessly with Montessori philosophy and is an excellent alternative perspective that illustrates the value of a Montessori education.



May Peace Prevail On Earth
Que La Paz Prevalzca En La Tierra