

How I Found Montessori

by Greg MacDonald



Do you dream of a career where you find every morning that you can't wait to get to work? Are you interested in pursuing a profession in which every day is different, contains the unexpected, yet is just so much fun that you don't want the day to end?

That's what I wanted for my life, and I started out in search of that career by studying to be an elementary teacher. Then I discovered the work of Maria Montessori, and **my search took a different direction ...**

It seems as though it was just yesterday that I read my first Montessori book. I was in my early twenties (so it was actually a long way beyond "yesterday") and completing my training as an elementary public school teacher in Australia. I remember constantly putting down that book (*The Child in the Family*, by Maria Montessori) as I realized that what I was reading was right, but that it wasn't what I was hearing in the teacher education course that I was taking.

In that course, I'd been introduced to many theories of education, and I'd been introduced to many concepts of child development. I'd been shown many approaches and techniques for use in my future classroom practice. **But the theories and the practices were unconnected.** There was little or no information from the theorists as to how their ideas might be implemented with children, and there was no indication from the practitioners as to the rationale/s for their recommended approaches to teaching.

Educational theory and practice it seemed were two isolated worlds, each operating in ignorance of the other.

I remember enormous apprehension when I considered the career that lay ahead of me, and I remember that I was far from alone in this feeling. How could I effectively implement some of the theories that I'd read about and which resonated with me? How could I know which classroom practices were right, and how on earth would I justify any of them to administrators, colleagues or parents of the children in my care?

Then, almost by accident, I had opened this book written by Maria Montessori.

I immediately recognized that in Montessori, theory and practice were interwoven, and that each informed the other. **This dynamic is as alive today as it was then: Montessori theory continues to contribute to improved Montessori practice, and Montessori practice continues to build our understanding of children and of education!**

This is the achievement that caused me to pursue Montessori training over thirty years ago. (I told you it was way beyond yesterday ...)

Now, as an AMI elementary teacher trainer, I have made this unique partnership between Montessori theory and practice a cornerstone of any course that I conduct. I have also worked very hard to **take every student training with me on a journey that goes beyond Montessori philosophy/psychology** and a method for presenting Montessori materials to children. I underpin these two critical strands of Montessori training with **practical classroom techniques and approaches that place successful delivery of Maria Montessori's vision for the child within the grasp of anyone** who cares to work towards this objective.

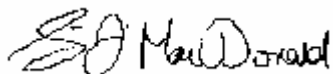
Elementary Montessori training at the Montessori Institute of San Diego (MISD) will enable you to consider the "science" of teaching (Montessori theory, Montessori practice), and the "art" of teaching (the many different practical techniques and approaches that MISD training places at your disposal). **We'll look at how you can best blend this science and art of teaching with your own unique personality, background, skills and knowledge.** The science and art of our work have to come together – It's no use studying one and not the other.

I hope that you'll join me on this adventure that Montessori created for us over a century ago. We'll study her theory in depth. We'll examine each of her wonderful elementary materials in light of this theory. And every day as we cover different aspects of AMI training, we will also discuss how this theory and practice impact our work with children. We'll consider the easy questions, and we'll look at the most difficult questions. We'll also spend many days examining these very practical aspects of our work.

This is something unique that you can only begin at MISD. The journey will last for your whole career, and there is no more rewarding career than this. In fact, **I believe that no career is more stimulating to the mind, the heart, and to the creative powers of its practitioners than a Montessori career.** And there's an added bonus: AMI-trained Montessori elementary teachers are in demand worldwide – Every year there are more positions available than there are trained people to fill them!

If you are drawn to this exceptional profession as I have been, I encourage you to apply to my first course at MISD which starts in August 2014. I look forward to getting to know you this year, and to continuing our relationship well into the future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg MacDonald". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "G" and "M".

Greg MacDonald,
Director of Elementary Training
Montessori Institute of San Diego