



RESPONSE TO A RECENT REFERENCE TO MONTESSORI EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

Article: Chrysanthos, N., and Baker, J. (2021, April 21). 'How pictures of BLM posters on a classroom ceiling ignited a media storm'. *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

... "Its approach to education is more reminiscent of a Montessori school than a conventional public one; there are no uniforms, no bells, and teachers are called by their first name." ...

As a trained Montessori teacher for over 40 years and involved in the member based association of MSCA (Montessori Schools and Centres Australia) I am concerned that the writer sees the non wearing of uniform, no bells and teachers being called by their first names as key indicators of a Montessori school.

Indeed those aspects might be seen in a Montessori school however they are present as a result of an extremely well considered philosophy developed after many years of scientific observation and based on a premise of deep respect for all persons leading to true equality and peace. The philosophy, despite being over 100 years old continues to be upheld by current research as a leading edge educational approach.

Students are indeed encouraged to have a voice however at any given time grace and courtesy to all is an expectation, role modelled by adults in the school from a young age. The key word in a Montessori school is independence; students gain advanced 'soft skills' including time management and the opportunity to enter a state of deep concentration; neither of which would be possible with external bells ringing.

In a Montessori school students are free to express themselves – they choose their clothes whilst learning that clothes or name titles are not the person – rather they are encouraged to see each person for who they are leading to a realisation that respectful relationships lead to functional and collegial communities.

I do hope that those reading the article have not been misled by the writers in what would appear to be an out of context reference and somewhat simplified interpretation of aspects of a Montessori school.

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