

MONTESSORI LEADERSHIP

Guiding the Guide

Norsk Montessori Forbund - Nasjonal Montessori Kongress 23. mars 2019

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OUR AGENDA TODAY

- ▶ explore ways of applying the Montessori philosophy for leaders
- ▶ examine some of the different scenarios faced by Montessori leaders,
- ▶ focus on how to prepare an environment for the adults
- ▶ focus on how to keep them inspired.
- ▶ be creative in finding solutions
- ▶ discussion, interactive questioning, role play games.
- ▶ **NOW – take one minute to write down and reflect on your expectations for this workshop – not for sharing!**



Leadership vs Management

- Leadership is about inspiring and leading others to follow in a certain direction.
 - Management is the structure which supports the skills of leadership. (? A Prepared Environment?)
 - It is difficult to inspire if the structure is poor!
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The School Manager

- “The role of the manager in any organisation is largely about maintaining a balance between the needs and goals of the organisation as expressed by different interested parties”
 - **Staff**
 - **Pupils**
 - **Parents**
 - **The Board**
 - **The Authorities**




Leader vs Manager

- Is there a difference?
- It is the same many times during the day
- BUT leadership requires you to LEAD
- Leading includes inspiration, example, motivation, holding to an ideal or a mission statement



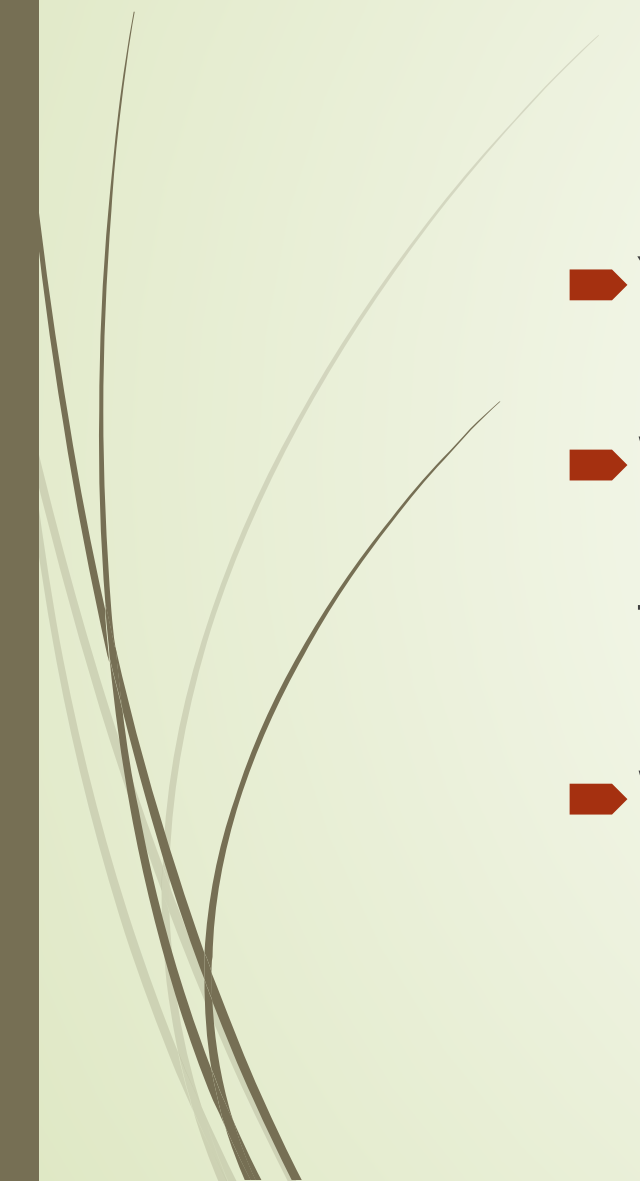
Challenges! Some examples...

- ▶ Parents who do not understand the method and constantly compare their children's progress to children from other schools
 - ▶ Board members who want to take a hands-on role in the school without fully understanding the challenges of a Montessori school
 - ▶ Teachers who panic about the requirements of the state curriculum and lose sight of Montessori principles as they do so.
 - ▶ And many more similar challenges.
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Identify YOUR Challenges *5-10 minutes*

(Groups of 4-6 – similar schools/age group)

- Your main challenges? **IDENTIFY TWO**
 - Which parties do these challenges come from?
 - What factors aggravate these challenges?
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Leading a Montessori School is different!

- A Montessori school exists because of a certain core philosophy
 - The core philosophy must be THE CENTRE of all decisions
 - ...If it is not at the centre, the philosophy will soon fade away
 - ...because, when challenged, human nature always returns to the most common solution ...
 - ...which is **not** the Montessori philosophy!
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The Role of the Leader?

- The leader has the task of “holding” that position (keeping Montessori at the centre).
 - The leader leads others back to their core objectives – Montessori!
 - [Your other tasks are probably management!]
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Montessori Principles for Leadership

- Respect for adults
 - Freedom within Limits for adults
 - Guidance without judgement (objective)
 - A friendly attitude to error for adults
 - Appraisal **without** rewards or punishments!
 - Inspiration
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ROLE PLAY (same groups) 20 minutes

- Divide your group into two parts
- ONE group is the leader and his/ her assistants –
 - *Remember to apply Montessori principles*
- OTHER group is the complainants – parents OR staff members OR board members OR pupils OR whoever?
 - Be energetic in your arguments!
- Review the first challenge (next slide)(10 mins)
- Switch roles and review the second challenge
- HAVE FUN!!!!



Choose ONE scenario – DRAMA required!!

- ▶ Choose one or both of the challenges you identified earlier

OR –

- ▶ Board member offers Spanish lessons every Tues and Thurs from 10-11
- ▶ Parents request homework as they are unable to monitor their children's work
- ▶ Teachers want to remove free choice from 8.30-10 to cover essential curriculum items
- ▶ Kindergarten – Parents complain that children need to be outdoors more and want less time on materials
- ▶ Secondary – A parent has persuaded the board to suggest a rewards system to motivate pupils to study more. They believe adolescents need this!




Responsibilities of a leader

- Prepare an environment that nurtures inspiration, creativity and enjoyment for work
- Lead by example
- Set up routines that support hearing and being heard
- Managing situations, making the rules clear
- Creating an atmosphere of friendly attitude to error - tolerance and learning




Observation & Reflection

- **Why observe? Do you Inspire your staff to observe?**
 - **When and how to observe? Do you structure opportunities for observation?**
 - **Do you have a reporting system for observation?**
 - **Do you take time to observe?**
 - **Do you take time to reflect?**
 - **Are you aware of the impact of your own personality?**
 - **It is ok! You are human too! But be aware!**
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The Custodian of the Environment

- Protect the work cycle
 - Protect the staff as they study Montessori
 - Protect the teachers from too much stress about curriculum
 - Protect the children's rights to enjoy work, to choose freely, to get sufficient guidance
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Stories & Discussion


- **Changing attitudes takes practice and awareness**
 - **Using a system of stories and discussion is an example of how to guide, not preach**
 - **Open conversation – guided (FuelBox)**
 - **Allow people to feel they “taught themselves”**
 - **Use this type of learning with parents, staff, board**
 - **It will create a school culture of awareness and reflection**
 - **This is a useful tool! Story telling is growing as a way of teaching**
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Conscious Adult Conscious Child

Groups of 4-6

- Chapter 5 OR Chapter 6
- Rotate the reading.
 - Read the quotations
 - Read TWO stories from TWO age groups 0-3, 3-6, 6-12, 12-18
- Take 1 or 2 minutes to reflect personally
- Read the Guidelines for Activities – Select ONE or TWO
- Discussion 15 minutes



PERSONAL REFLECTION on the workshop
2 minutes – NOT for sharing

- Did the workshop match my expectations?
- Did I get new ideas? Did I learn?
- Did my own attitudes change in any way?
- Did anything challenge me at a personal level?
Do I know why?

Thank you!

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