

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL - EARLY LEARNING, PRIMARY & SECONDARY

CHRONICLE

SPRING



SUPPORT YOUNG
CHILDREN WITH
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

UNDERSTANDING
THE SOCIAL SIDE
OF THE 6-9 CHILD

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SPRING 2022 NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE



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NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE
SPRING 2022

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TERM 3 AT NORTHSIDE



With Term 3 drawing to close it is interesting to reflect on the past 10 weeks and the many events and activities that have occurred during this term. While it seems that each term is a little busier than the previous one, Term 3 really has been like pre-Covid times, yet with the remnants of Covid, such as absence of students and staff due to sickness and the changes in rules regarding isolation periods. Despite these things we have had a very positive Term 3 at Northside.

In Term 3 we generally spend a bit of time promoting the school at various locations and events. We attend Westfields Hornsby with a display, and are also present at the North Shore Schools EXPO at Chatswood. Each of these events allows us to not only inform people about the wonderful education and community that we have at Northside, but also provide information to the general public about Montessori Education and what a wonderful model of schooling it is. During these events we meet many interesting people, and it is great to raise awareness of the Montessori model of education and Northside. We also invite prospective parents to our Open Day which occurs in Term 3, which was well attended by many families interested in enrolling their son or daughter at Northside.

Another event that we celebrated in Term 3 as a school was Maria Montessori's birthday. On this day we celebrated with a Fun Day for the student. It was a lovely time of celebration and activities throughout the day. We love community events for both students and parents, and the students really had a terrific time on this day.



At the beginning of September, we held our Father's Day breakfast, with a large number of fathers and parents attending on this day. It was great to share breakfast together and then see parents in the classrooms with their children enjoying the work that the children were doing. Thank you to all those who attended on this day, and also to the parents who assisted preparing breakfast from very early in the morning.

Parent Education and Information Nights

One very important feature of our school are parent education and information sessions. During Covid, many of these activities were put on hold, but since this time we have sought to reintroduce them into our school program. During Term 3 we were pleased to have a parent information session on the 'Transition to Primary' presented by our Deputy Principal Janene Johnson. This session was well attended and there were a good number of parents in attendance and also some excellent questions.

We also provided a parent information session for our Adolescent Program which has commenced this year. During this session parents were able to hear about the program that we are developing for our High School

students and how the Montessori model of education is a key aspect to the development of the program and how we implement the NSW Curriculum. During this evening there were many wonderful questions from parents, many of which focused on the quality of our program and how we understand and evaluate what we are offering.

We are very excited about the opportunity to provide a Montessori Adolescent program at Northside, and we are confident that our program is providing a quality educational experience for our children for a number of reasons.

Registered and Accredited with NESA

Our program is monitored and approved by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Until we introduced the High School program, our school, like all other independent Schools in NSW generally have an inspection every 5 years. NESA are always pleased with how we implement the NSW Curriculum during these visits. Since we are adding additional years of schooling to develop our High School, NESA undertake this registration process for each year annually. This means that for the next 5 years we will have a NESA inspection



to monitor the quality of our educational programs each year. This provides confidence that a third party is ensuring that our programs meet the requirements of the NSW Curriculum. Our program has also been Accredited by NESA to provide the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) credential to students as they progress through our secondary program.

Quality Educators

A key feature of Northside is that we have excellent staff. This statement is very true in our Adolescent program. We believe that in a Montessori setting it is important to have staff who understand the philosophy of Montessori education and are also trained in this method. We are very pleased that our staff have undertaken or are currently undertaking Montessori training for 6-12 as well as the Adolescent method for 12-18.

Positive Experiences

Since commencing the program we are very pleased to have cohort of students who are really enjoying their Year 7 experience and are producing quality work in the program. Like any of our classes we have students with a wide range of skills and abilities across a range of subjects and disciplines. Our Model of education aims

to meet the needs of each student across these subject areas and provide opportunities for them to develop and learn. The feedback throughout this year has been very positive and the students have undertaken a wide range of activities and learning opportunities both within the classroom and beyond.

A Shared Experience

There is very strong and established network of Montessori Adolescent programs both within Australia and across the world. Our staff have sought to draw on the experience of these programs and network with educators across the world to share ideas and practises that help to build on what we have already developed and align ourselves with best practice Montessori Adolescent Education.

We are certainly very fortunate at Northside to be able to offer high quality Montessori Education from Toddler through to High School. We thank the parent community for their support throughout Term 3 and look forward to an eventful Term 4 with production and graduation being key highlights of the term to come.

Adam Scotney
Principal







"Establishing enduring peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of the war"

- Maria Montessori

SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION

by Sandra Sin (Toddler / Transition)

Peace is a core component of the Montessori curriculum. Dr. Maria Montessori is considered as the 'founder of peace education'. She believed that children must be provided lessons on global citizenship, diversity, equality and unity.

On their learning pathway of developing respect and compassion for others, young children in our transition program are supported to practice conflict resolution. No one likes dealing with conflict. Conflicts may not be pleasant, but they do create learning opportunities for young children as they begin to develop relationships with others. In our Transition class, under our gentle guidance and encouragement, toddlers are provided time and opportunities to improve their problem-solving skills within managing conflict in a healthy manner.

What makes conflict difficult to handle is the way they bring out overwhelmingly intense emotions that young children may not have the tools to process. Before the cause of the conflict be addressed with our support, children are calmed down and guided in order to identify their emotions. Are they feeling

anger? Frustration? Hurts? Sometimes, by describing their facial expressions and make the same expression ourselves may help toddlers feel more understood.

Once their intense emotions have been calmed down through our gentle touches, a soft voice, and possibly some deep breathing practices, we talk them through the conflict. It's important for them to understand the original source of the conflict. We tell them what we think has happened because they may not be able to express the incident by their words and listen to them if they can explain.

Once children understand what the issue is, we can help them practice finding solutions. We hold an object if it is the cause of the conflict, talk to children through problem solving strategies and/or provide them with choices to the solution. We acknowledge when they solve the problem by saying "You found another activity to do while you waited for your turn. You solved the problem."

One of the most powerful things we can do to help children learn conflict resolution is to show them how it's done, as demonstrating through our calm approach conveys that conflicts are okay and that they can be resolved with help. When appropriate, we talk to children through how we ourselves would solve the conflict. By seeing how we succeed and make mistakes along the way, children are more likely to learn that solving conflicts is possible even when it's hard.



FOSTERING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

by Helen Atkins-Carey (3-6 Kookaburra Directress)

Maria Montessori recognised that during those early years of the child's life, there is a critical period when learning a particular skill or developing a specific aptitude for learning is present. These are referred to as sensitive periods. The sensitive period for learning language is fascinating. It begins before birth and the child continues to acquire the language skills until they are six years old.

I am always amazed by how young children can acquire language with such accuracy and ease. It is now widely recognised that a baby in the earliest days or even hours after birth, can recognise the sound of the human voice. Moreover, the child learns the language without effort or consciousness; he learns language with the perfection that no adult could achieve when learning a new language. For this reason, we speak to and listen to the child with the same patience and interest that one would show to an adult.

Our Montessori environment is rich in opportunities to experience language in all its forms. From the time the child enters the casa at three years old they are being offered the tools and resources to enhance

their learning opportunities. The area of practical life strengthens and prepares the hand for writing, the eyes and hands learn to work to coordinate, the left to right sequence for reading and writing becomes a natural process and prepare the child for further learning in writing and reading. This all happens through the daily activities and work choices that the child engages with throughout the day.

The approach to oral language work is divided into two areas in the environment; *enrichment of vocabulary and language training*.

The first area is concerned with giving the child the opportunity to enrich his vocabulary relating to their environment. Most of their work is carried out visually, sensorily and from conversations with others in their environment. Language lessons happen throughout the day with the language of grace and courtesy, naming items in the environment, contents of a lunch box or discussions around similarities and differences or whether it is a cup or a mug, a refrigerator, or a fridge!? Connecting with families allows the Directress to become better informed about each child and their family's language history. By bringing this into the environment, this helps us support individuals who are learning more than one language.

The Directress makes a conscious effort to always give the child the correct terminology and names of objects. In doing this, the child absorbs the language and terms without consciously remembering them. We play games such as 'I spy' using phonetics, question games, finding objects in the environment, and naming friends beginning with the sound 'a'. Clapping out words



“The development of language is part of the development of the personality, for words are the natural means of expressing thoughts and establishing understanding between people”

- Maria Montessori

helps to identify the number of syllables and highlights the sounds that the child needs to hear. This builds on existing language skills and fosters interest and curiosity around language.

We offer the child the freedom to converse with others when he wishes if he does not interrupt others' work. The children are encouraged to express themselves, which helps build their self-confidence and language use, thus allowing them to develop their own personalities.

In the second area, the child is exposed to written language through stories. To prepare the child for life and later language work, we must provide him with the opportunity to develop a rich vocabulary forming the basis for further learning. The child is exposed to many books on diverse topics. This helps to develop an awareness of not just of his own environment, but of the natural world in which he lives. This acquisition of language can be extended with children when they engage with the material in the cultural area. Folders of information from various continents, language cards, classification cards and books of information are introduced to the child covering the areas of Geography, History, Zoology and Botany.

I am frequently asked by families how they can support their child language development, regardless of the language spoken at home, the following suggestions may be helpful;

- Listen to your child with interest and allow them to finish speaking without interruption. Use clarifying questions when they are finished.
- Ask questions about their day and respond to their answers with support.
- Share stories and rhymes from your own childhood, even if they are in a language different from your child's. This helps develop interest and curiosity about the world around him.
- Make up your own nonsense rhymes or poems.
- Eat together whenever possible, and practice taking turns to speak about your day.
- Take time to share your child's interests, then help them to research in a book or online.
- Tell true stories with a beginning, a middle and end. Make sure to keep it simple; for example, tell them about something you saw while waiting for them today. They will delight in the stories you tell.
- On long trips, have conversations with the child in the car.
- Turn your phone off where possible.

There are many ways to help your child with their vocabulary and their abilities to turn take in conversation and these important skills will foster their self - esteem, confidence, and ability to communicate successfully in the later years.





WHAT IS COSMIC EDUCATION?

by Adam Scotney (Principal)

Recently during a Parent Information session our Deputy Principal was speaking about the transition from Pre-Primary into Primary School. It was lovely to see so many parents attending, and during the session Janene spoke briefly about 'Cosmic Education', a term coined by Maria Montessori and a key feature of the work in the 6-9 and 9-12 classroom.

The First and Second Plane

If we think about the links between the First Plane (0-6) and Second Plane (6-12), Montessori said that in the first plane the child has developed a large factual base, and has already been exposed to their own and some other cultures. We know that the child in this plane has had an absorbent mind for 6 years, working in the prepared environment, and will no doubt have already been able to abstract some facts about the world.

Because of this, the Second Plane child will now be asking questions about these facts. They will be questioning all the facts that have been accumulated during their first 6 years.

"Reasoning keeps things in their relation to one another, compares them, deduces from them, arrives at conclusions, and when the conclusions have been

arrived at, there is a state of psychic satisfaction, and with this, a sense of calm and repose."

(Dr Montessori, 21st International Course extension, January 1936)

The questioning and reasoning of the Second Plane child will bring about the calm and peace that knowing about something will bring. In describing the Second Plane child Montessori also said that,

"In this intellectual period, the child's questions are innumerable. They want to know everything. Their thirst for knowledge is so insatiable that generally, people are at their wit's end about it. Therefore, they mostly choose the easy way, and simply force the child to be silent and to learn only what we grown ups consider useful for them. But in doing so, we also destroy their spontaneous interest. Learning, then, becomes a tedious and tiresome business. The result is all sorts of deviations in the child's personality. It should be realised that genuine interest cannot be forced, therefore, all methods of education based on centres of interest which have been chosen by adults are wrong. Moreover, these centres of interest are superfluous, for the child is interested in everything. A global vision of cosmic events fascinates the child and their interest will soon remain fixed on one particular part, as a starting point for more intensive studies. As all parts are related, they will all be scrutinised sooner or later; thus, the way leads from the whole, via the parts, back to the whole. Thus, the child will develop a kind of philosophy which teaches them the unity of the universe. This is the



very thing to organise their intelligence and to give them a better insight into their own place and task in the world, at the same time, presenting a chance for the development of their creative energy.”(Maria Montessori, Lecture in Amsterdam)

In the second plane our aim is to provide children with the opportunity to have interest sparked and then leave them to work to and further exploration. One of the important ideas that Montessori identifies is that we cannot make or create interest for the child. We can only provide opportunity for the child to develop an interest of their own. This may come through reintroduction of materials or concepts as was in the first plane. In the second plane this is also required and we seek to make the presentations as engaging and exciting as possible, though recognising that this interest will not always occur at the same time for every child, we cannot always determine when these interest will occur. Therefore, in the Montessori environment we try to avoid linear curriculum where children only see things at certain times across the second plane. We look at develop the interest of the child by sowing seeds of knowledge throughout the second plane.

What then is Cosmic Education?

In exploring the world and all aspects of the curriculum we want children to consider the interconnected nature of the world that we live in.

What would be the link that holds the cosmos together?

What would hold all of the elements of the universe and life forms together?

What is it that keeps the planets from dropping out of the sky, what would bring human beings to live in peace with one another?

What Maria Montessori saw as the solution to all of this was order. Order was the structure that kept things in place, and in the 6-9 and 9-12 classroom we seek to find to show to children that laws and order is the basis of life and culture.

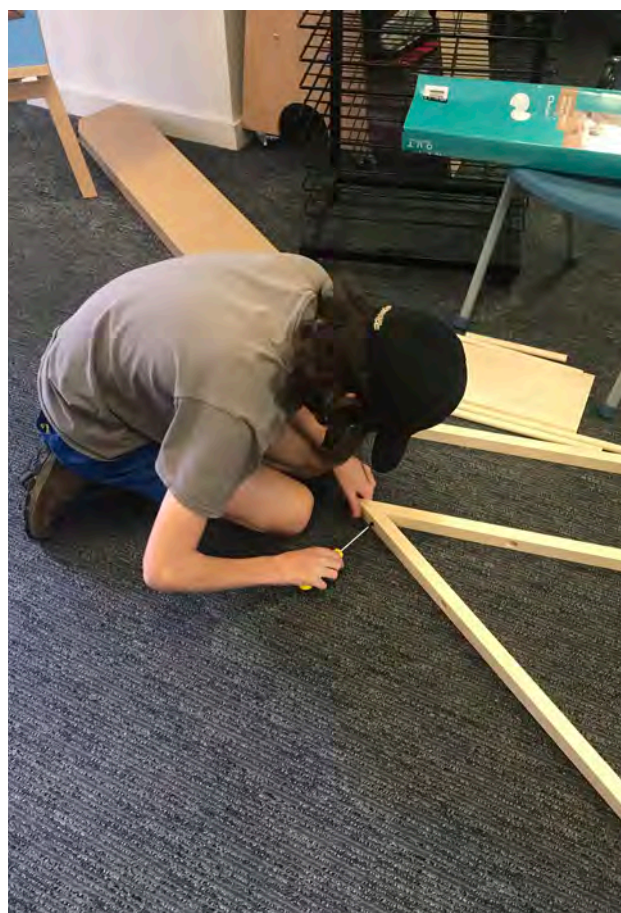
We want to show the interrelatedness of everything in the universe to children?

This is what Maria Montessori really meant by Cosmic Education.

Within the classroom Cosmic education is all of these things, showing interrelatedness of our world, laws and order, beautiful materials, and free work.

“Cosmic Education is related to the development of human beings, not just a new educational method, or a new technique of teaching subjects in a syllabus. Cosmic Education is a form of relating children to the universe, its furnishings, and humanity, so that they are able to understand the law and order underlying their existence and to realise in themselves all the developing potential that is their birthright.”

Montessori said that one of the important aspects of implementing Cosmic Education in the classroom is that we show the links and relationships to each area of the universe. As we foster a love of learning in the Montessori classroom, we want the children to experience the world as a continuing story and an unfolding adventure in which they have a significant part to play.





GUNYAH IN TERM 3

by Vyshnavi Bharadwaj (Gunyah 6-9 Directress)

"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are a part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

- Dr Maria Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*

There is a famous quote that says, "Choose a job you love, and you never have to work a day in your life." This simple yet powerful sentence has resonated in my heart ever since I began working at Northside and even so now, as I take on my role as the Directress of Gunyah this term.

It has been an incredibly busy and productive term and I cannot believe how fast it has flown. We have welcomed two new students to our class, Leora and Rory and welcoming a new friend Raiden in Term 4. These two children have been made to feel very welcome by the rest of the class and we are sure that they will enjoy their time with us.

This term we learnt the first two of **Maria Montessori's Great Lessons**. The first Great Lesson, "The God With No Hands", is a story about how the universe may have begun from a very simplistic scientific view. Children explored how water came to be on Earth and came with wonderful ideas about this. They conducted experiments with test tubes to understand the three states of matter and deepen their level of understanding on some of these concepts.

The second Great Lesson, "The Timeline of Life", introduces the story related to the beginning of life on earth. This timeline is a long chart that shows life

appearing in water and a variety of other creatures that emerged over time. We then looked at different groups of animals such as amphibians, mammals, birds, reptiles and finally the dinosaurs. Children had a great dialogue about dinosaurs and had some interesting discussions about the mightiest dinosaurs that roamed on earth.

Father's Day, the children were able to have a special morning to sit alongside their dad and show them their favourite piece of material in the Environment. It was so lovely to see the children's enthusiasm to teach them activities and quiz their understanding in the end.

This term we have been fortunate to go **swimming**. Children enjoyed walking to the pool and back. We had many interesting conversations and sang a song or two on our return trips. They were coached by Mary, our incredible sports teacher and enjoyed swimming lessons with their friends.

We have a **Community Meeting** every Friday afternoon and children volunteer to run the meeting. These children who run the meeting are called leaders. They begin with an Acknowledgment of country, then lead their classmates to the meeting structured in three parts. First, they discuss the issue, then they propose solutions, and last, they vote for what solution to implement. The children take turns to raise their



concerns and to explain their suggested solutions. The leaders fulfill the roles of facilitator, and scribe, making sure that everyone listen to the person who is talking. All of this happens elegantly with very little facilitation or interference by me, and no shaming or blaming.

Handwork in the classroom, Thanks to Jane for introducing art and craft in the room and encouraging children to take on new projects. She has prepared the materials and as every other area in our Environment, she has put together a shelf that is enticing. Children enjoy handwork every day.

I would like to say thank you to this community especially the children for welcoming me to Gunyah. I look forward to our journey together and end this article with one of my favourite quotes by Dr Maria Montessori *"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are a part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity"* (Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential)



UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL SIDE OF THE 6-9 CHILD

by Linda Van Lierop (Cooinda 6-9 Directress)

As a child enters the 6-12 plane of development they undergo some big changes. These changes tend to fall under the categories of social, intellectual, and physical.

When looking at the social characteristics of this Second Plane child, you can see the great shift towards their peer group. Where previously the child was mainly a solitary being, the child will now gravitate towards their peers and others in their environment. As the 6-9 child starts transitioning into their new environment, they feel a desire to join in and belong, causing them to start pulling back from their parents (especially around drop off and collection, when near their peers). Not content anymore in being their own ship in a fleet, now they prefer to be one of the crew members on the same ship as the rest of their classmates.

The other area that we can observe a great change is in the child's moral development; their sense of fairness and justice. As the child starts developing and building these friendship bonds, we can start to observe cliques and various relationships develop. A big part of these friendships and being part of the team

(the class) is developing their understanding of fairness and justice (understanding why and when some things are considered good or bad).

This developing morality combined with their need to 'fit in', can sometimes lead to issues of teasing or bullying. Teasing and bullying are very different, and it is important for the adult to understand the difference so that they can best support their child.

Teasing can sometimes have playful intent, and when appropriate, can assist children in developing stronger friendship bonds. When, and if, teasing is done in a repetitious manner, with the intent to hurt or cause harm (physically, mentally, emotionally or socially) then it can develop into bullying.

It isn't uncommon for children to tease one another in a good-natured way. These social exchanges can be a means of bonding and joking. Overtime and with experience, these 'jokes' can assist them in learning to deal with real constructive criticism and feedback later on in life. Teasing can also be used by peers to assist in teaching social skills e.g. not to stare (e.g. 'are you still looking at (insert other students' name)?')





Unfortunately, teasing can also be used in communicating negative ideas and feelings. Teasing can also be used to organise the social hierarchy in a group, to encourage less-positive behaviours and depending on the point of view, lead to hurt feelings.

Bullying on the other hand, is when the intention behind the words/ actions is to cause pain, hurt and /or embarrassment. Bullying is a repeated action with the aim to cause hurt. It can take place verbally, physically, mentally, sexually or through cyberspace.

Often children who struggle with social skills or have difficulty making friends will put up with inappropriate teasing or bullying just to be liked. We need to assist children to understand that this behaviour is not appropriate.

To help a child distinguish between teasing and bullying, ask them to think about how the actions makes them feel.

Are the actions done by someone who isn't a friend?

Does it make them feel bad or sad?

If told to stop, does the other person keep going?

Has it happened before?

Would they refuse to apologise if they knew you were upset/ hurt?

If they answer 'yes' to any of these, then it may be either negative teasing or bullying. This is when the child needs to approach staff for help and support.

Some key strategies that you can teach to your child to help them manage unwanted teasing: -

- say 'stop'
- move/ walk away
- report the behaviour to a staff member or reliable adult
- find a buddy who will stand by your side.
- encourage your child to speak to a trusted adult about how they feel (be supportive, not judgemental when listening)
- encourage your child to stand up/ speak up for others
- role play different scenarios

Social skills are honed and developed over time through interactions with others. If a child can develop their social skills, they will have more success in being assertive when caught in difficult social scenarios:

- ability to communicate clearly
- have empathy/ perspective taking
- the ability to share
- ability to cooperate
- active listening skills
- respect for the personal space of others
- able to make eye contact
- able to follow directions



If your child requires assistance in developing these skills, open communication and role playing with your child can help. Teach them to ask questions, as this can help them form stronger connections. Practice role-playing a variety of scenarios with your child to give them more concrete examples to relate to. Teach your child empathy, as understanding how others feel, can assist with forming bonds and cooperative behaviours. Lastly, role model appropriate social behaviours through your own interactions with other people in your community e.g. family, friends, neighbours, shop staff etc. Children typically learn better through actions over words. If more assistance is still required, there are

many workshops and courses out there that teach these social skills to children.

Lastly, embrace the changes with your child as they move from 3-6 into 6-9. Helping them to see these changes as positive developments that will help them make stronger friendships in life. Focus on assisting them to understand that not everything is said to hurt and that we they have the power to choose the people they want in their lives. They can be polite and courteous to everyone, but choose with whom they want to spend their personal time and energy.



LIFE IN 9-12



by Rebecca Grimshaw (Orana 9-12 Directress)

It was lovely to see the 9-12 Amaroo and Orana students return to school in Term 3 after our school camp to Canberra and the school holidays with such enthusiasm and excitement.

Term 3 commenced with the Year 6 students participating in debates in which they practised their public speaking and debate skills to discuss assigned topics with other schools. The students participated in several debates and discussed topics representing both the affirmative and negative in relation to their debate topic. During this process the students researched their topic and wrote their discussion paper based on their assigned speaker responsibilities. The students enjoy debating while practising their public speaking to deliver their opinions supported with research specific content.

During the term, the students of Amaroo and Orana have participated in Peer Support Australia with a focus on living positively and optimism. Prior to the sessions commencing the Year 6 students participated in leadership training in which they participated in discussions and activities to further develop their skills when managing small groups of students while

completing a variety of tasks. The peer support sessions are conducted every Thursday afternoon and the 9-12 students are assigned a group of Primary students who they work with each week to develop their social and emotional well-being throughout a variety of activities. The Year 6 students develop their leadership skills and participate in a reflective debrief session after every session to discuss their management of the session. The Year 5 students are assigned as a Co-Group Leader, and they work alongside their Group Leader to manage the sessions.

Both the Amaroo and Orana students enjoyed learning with Healthy Harold this term through their participation in various sessions to discuss how the body works, emotions, being cyber-wise, and the importance of relating to others through connection and respect. The students participating in some Healthy Eating sessions in which they learnt about the importance of diet and the foods we eat.

Some of the Amaroo and Orana students held a fundraiser to bring awareness to the Varroa Mite which is a tiny red-brown external parasite of honey bees. The students involved carried out extensive research and undertook sewing and cooking to make a variety of items which they then sold at school to raise funds for their chosen charity. This was a very enjoyable event and all the students involved demonstrated



their exceptional managerial and collaborative skills to organise a very successful fundraiser.

The Amaroo and Orana students participated in an information session called 'Regeneration Australia' and watched a documentary about what Australia will look like in the future with an emphasis on sustainable living and the changes that we all can make now to achieve this goal. This session prompted a lot of discussion and further research around the issues discussed during the documentary and the students' interests regarding climate change and sustainability.

The Amaroo and Orana students have started preparing for the 6-12 production that will be performed in Term 4. The Year 6 students have written their scripts and helped choreograph the dances. All the students have started learning their dances and songs enthusiastically and have had a positive attitude towards helping design and create their costumes, backdrops, and props. This is an exciting part of being in 9-12 and the students enjoy and look forward to showing their performance in Term 4.

During this term, the students enjoyed practising and demonstrating their sewing skills to make their Father's Day gifts. The students enjoyed learning from their peers on how to use a sewing machine to create their aprons. These skills will be further practised when it comes to designing and making their costumes for production.

There has been an explosion of mathematics in Amaroo and Orana with the students completing long division, square root, binomial algorithms, squaring, exploration of geometry and angles, decimals, and fraction work. The students have been solidifying their knowledge whilst exploring with the Montessori materials and moving towards abstraction.

At the end of Term 3, the students of Amaroo and Orana have been learning about the work of water and practising their geography skills to complete specific continents with rivers, lakes, capital cities and populations. The students have been exploring the cycle of water and will now be visiting Warragamba Dam early in Term 4.

From Week 6, the Amaroo and Orana students have been participating in swimming for sport at the AquaBliss Centre at the end of Bobbin Head Road. The students enjoy a nice walk to and from the pool in their chosen groups. Whilst at the pool the students further develop their swimming techniques and skills in their group lessons.

During Term 3, we welcomed Fletcher, Archie, Suari, Nayla, Xavier, Oliver, and Sebastian, to 9-12 and are very excited to have them in our classrooms.





"If you only study books,
you are studying things
second-hand."

- Montessori, 2018, p.40

AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Planning Content for the Adolescent Program

by Margaret Kroeger (Ngamuru Directress)

Maria Montessori was, indeed, a woman ahead of her time. Or maybe it is just that education is stuck in the past? In her book *From Childhood to Adolescence*, which was first published in 1948, she states *"Schools as they are today, are adapted neither to the needs of adolescence nor to the time in which we live."* She goes on to say that *"... schools have remained in a kind of arrested development, organized in a way that cannot have been well suited even to the needs of the past, but that today is actually in contrast with human progress."* (Montessori, 2014, p.56) Coming from a career as a mainstream teacher, I can see that her words, written more than half a century ago, could not be more applicable to the schools of today.

As a community, we have embraced the Adolescent Program, hoping that it will provide our children an alternative pathway to adulthood. One that focuses on their individual development and needs, rather than their ability to conform and recall facts on demand.

Change, however, can be daunting. As adults, most of us have attended mainstream high schools. You will most likely remember the bell ringing to indicate the end of a lesson, hurriedly packing away your belongings, rushing off to your next class, only to do the same thing again a short time later. Each concept

taught in isolation and catalogued in your brain into individual subjects, independent of one another. The content learnt in one lesson, stuck forever in that context. Is this really what we want for our children?

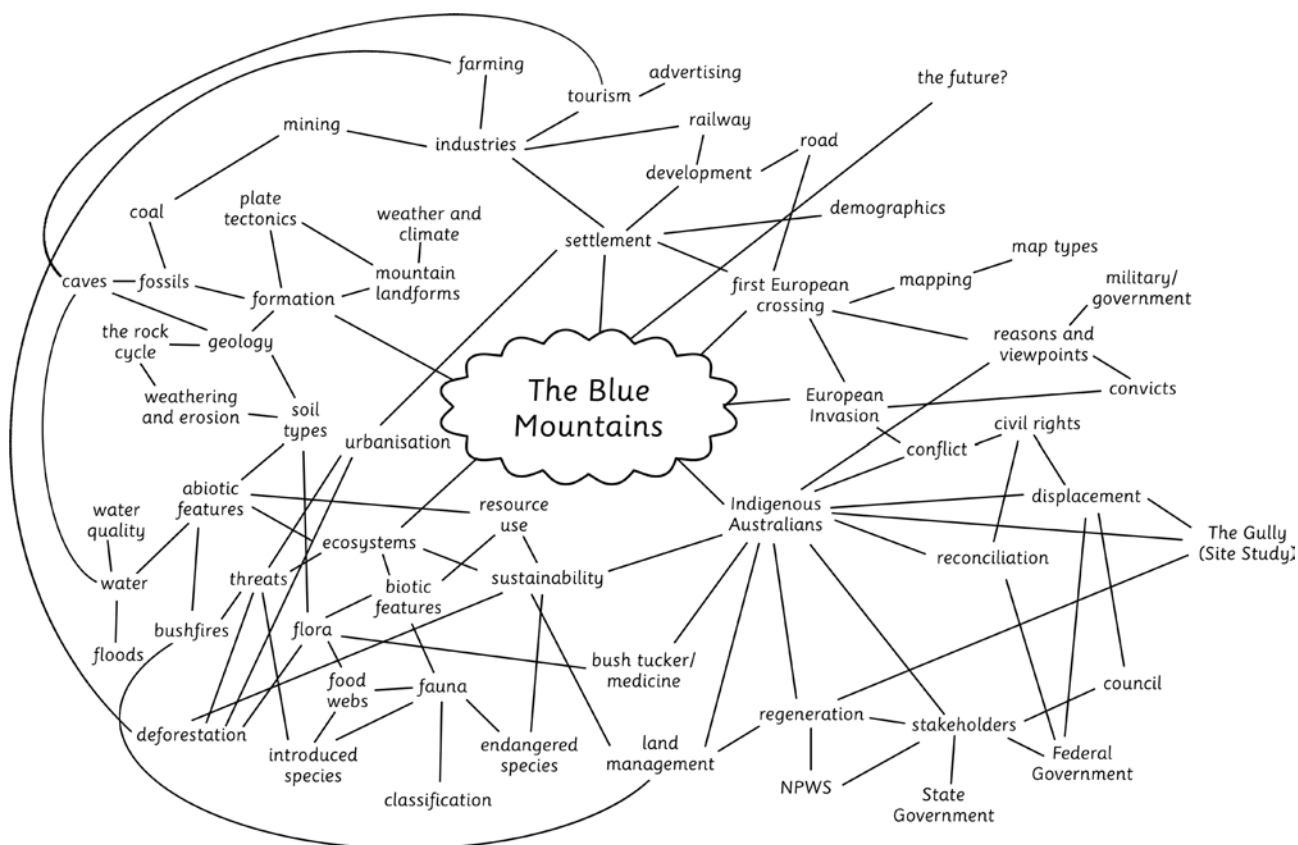
Where they usually change the teacher each hour without any sequence, it is hardly possible in the space of an hour to adopt the new way of thought. Whenever the adaptation is arrived at, the teacher changes. So, this precious and difficult period passes as a succession of changes or gasps.

(Montessori, 1936)

Some of us may have thrived in that environment and can see no reason why our children should not do the same. But why should they have to settle for an outdated system of disjointed and segregated lessons, just because we find the concept familiar? The integrated curriculum that we have developed for our Adolescent Program allows for deep concentration and sustained learning, with our students able to indulge in the many different aspects and viewpoints from which the content can be studied.

To give an example of the shortcomings of the NSW curriculum, plate tectonics are taught in Stage 4 Geography (Years 7 and 8) as a way that landforms are created. In Science, however, they are a part of





the Stage 5 syllabus (Years 9 and 10) and relate mainly to natural disasters, including volcanic eruptions. In History, Pompeii and the eruption of Mt Vesuvius is taught as a part of the ancient world in both Stage 4 and Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12).

As both a Geography and Science teacher in mainstream schools, I would be met with a mixed, but consistent, reaction from my students each and every year. Some would complain that they had already learnt about plate tectonics in Geography and why should they need to learn it again? Others would point out that they were in science class, so they conveniently have no recollection of anything that was learnt previously in Geography. Either way, they struggled to make a connection between what had been taught previously and the same information in a new context, up to three years later.

Study need not be restricted by the curricula of existing secondary schools and still less need we make use of their methods of dealing with the children or instilling culture. We must say at once that the aim should be to widen education instead of restricting it. (Montessori, 2014, p. 68)

So, how do we plan content here at Northside? We start by looking to the syllabus. After all, we must meet the strict regulations set by the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA). As educators, we discuss,

brainstorm and map, taking the content that needs to be taught at each stage and making links between it. It is then taught as a whole, not broken back up into individual subjects and students are encouraged to take their broad understanding of the whole and refine their knowledge by conducting research into areas of the content that interest them personally.

In this way, all content is covered and linked together to form the big picture. A picture of humanity and society, of moral consciousness and responsibility - meeting the developmental needs of the adolescent, who is in a sensitive period for social existence.

So, there are two plans: one is to disseminate knowledge, to follow a syllabus. The other is to look to at the life of man and serve it, and in serving it, help humanity. (Montessori, 2018, p.10)

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THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WATER AND SPORT

by Mary Abolins (Sports Teacher)

Today, we still turn to water for a sense of calm and clarity. We spend our vacations on the beach, we get exercise and enjoyment from water sports like surfing, scuba diving, sailing, rowing, and swimming; refresh ourselves with long showers and soothing baths, and often build our lives and homes around being near the water.

Swimming is an important part of an Australian lifestyle, yet there are some children who have never been in the ocean or in a swimming pool.

To me that is unfathomable, unfortunately for those children they may not have access to water, or their carers themselves did not have the opportunity when they were growing up to go swimming.

Sometimes we influence our children's activities from our own experiences when we were young.

You may have a love of the water, or a grandparent was a good swimmer or loved water sports, therefore this influences the activities you introduce to your children.

Swimming and water safety skills are important life skills, particularly in Australia, where aquatic activities are regularly enjoyed. Water safety skills developed in childhood provide a foundation for future aquatic activities. The acquisition of skills and knowledge provides a person with the competencies to be able to adapt and effectively deal with the challenges of everyday life.

Our Swimming lessons this term continue at Aqua Bliss Pymble, and we are fortunate the school gives the children the opportunity to learn to swim. Swimming is an incremental part of our physical education syllabus.

The skills and benefits they are learning are giving them confidence in the water, a heart and lung workout, improving their fine and gross motor skills, develop muscles, improve their appetite, learn a life skill, learn water safety and is a gateway to enjoying water sports and water activities.

Swimming was at its best this year at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England



with our swimming team collecting 46 gold medals.

The Commonwealth Games bring nations together in a colourful celebration of sport and human performance. Underpinned by the core values of humanity, equality and destiny, the Games aim to unite the Commonwealth family through a glorious festival of sport and culture.

Children and young people around the world watching the Commonwealth games would hopefully inspire a lifelong love of sport and physical activity.

It is up to us as educators' parents and carers to nurture, facilitate and support this engagement.

Maybe one day we have a future champion swimmer and their love of water and swimming started at Northside Montessori.

Yours in sport,
Mary.





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