

Sheri Schonleber, PhD Jerry Richmond, MS Louise Bogart, PhD Elizabeth Park, MEd

THE AMERICAN MONTESSORI METHOD

Considerations of Culture and Innovation

The American Montessori Method Considerations of Culture and Innovation

ABSTRACT: The Montessori method has been viewed as "fossilized" and neither relevant nor adaptive to today's educational landscape. Findings from this qualitative study indicate the American Montessori Method is both innovative and adaptive to the local cultural landscape and this adaptability is built into the model as envisioned by Nancy Rambusch McCormick.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover how the American Montessori Method has adapted as it has dispersed to local cultures in the Pacific Basin over the past 35 years.

METHODS: Data collection included individual interviews, use of archival data, and school visits. Grounded theory methodology quided the data analysis.

FINDINGS: Examples of culturally adaptive and innovative American Montessori models exist throughout the Pacific Basin. Successful models include the use of (a) the cosmic curriculum at all levels, (b) an integrated curriculum with the science as the basis, (c) the natural environment and (d) local experts.

IMPLICATIONS: If we are to answer the AMS challenge to bring Montessori to all the children of the world and successfully meet the needs of 21st century learners, then adaptation and innovation are both necessary and possible while remaining true to Montessori's philosophy and educational vision. A need emerges for a voice to insure the survival of Montessori through cultural adaptation and innovation.

LIMITATIONS: This regional study begs discourse in other cultural settings.

"When Montessori articulated her educational philosophy, she left the contextual details of its implementation to those living in the particular culture where her schools were established." (Rambusch, 1994)





The goal of education - "the development of a complete human being oriented to the environment, and adapted to his or her time, place and culture." (Lillard, 1996)



US - West Coast

"When you go into any other culture, it is important to be aware of where it is and where it can go, to ask yourself what are its struggles, what are its needs, and how can you help it. To serve that culture, you have to be there for the child and for the teacher, you can't be thinking of America or Japan or wherever you are from." (Bogart, 2002)

HAWAI'I

Chaminade (CUH) MTEP 1977* Montessori Assn of Hawai'i

CUH - Masters in Education - 1992**

CUH – El 1 & El 2 with State certification - 1996

CUH – Online Masters programs - 1997

Hawaiian Immersion Collaboration 1983-present**
Summer Montessori Mission Education
Program - SMMEP – 2005 - present**



1990

1970

1980

2000

2010

PHILIPPINES

Univ. of San Carlos (USC) – Education for Peace - outreach programs 1994-96*

USC - Montessori Training Institute - 1993*

CA - Head Start Commission - 1960's*

WA - Seattle University MTEP - 1971*

College of Notre Dame MTEP - 1964*

CA - Migrant communities - retreats/workshops - present*

USC – SMMEP – training and outreach – 2006 - present**

- CALMANDA TO L

Sr. Christina Trudeau receives AMS Lifetime Achievement Award - 2010

JAPAN

Notre Dame Seishin University MTEP – 1970*

Peace Workshops - Fr .Inui - 1994 - present*

LEGEND

*Sr. Trudeau initiated
**Sr. Trudeau inspired