

# Complexity Theory: Exploring the Transformation of a Montessori Teacher

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“We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.”  
(Montessori, 2007b, p. 6).



Self-reflection

“Since the beginning of Montessori teacher education programs, there has been a fundamental tenet of spiritual transformation.”  
(Montessori, 2007a)

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the Montessori teacher’s transformational process in their preparation to become a Montessori teacher.

**Research question:**

*How does the process of going through a Montessori teacher education program affect the spiritual and pedagogical transformation of the teacher?*

**BACKGROUND**

**Teacher Education Programs**

By providing qualified experienced guides and opportunities for growth, and critical thinking, these programs can bring about an environment where the interns go through a transformation that opens the door for evolution of our current educational paradigm.

**Spiritual Preparation**

There needs to be courage, support, and guidance for a teacher to spiritually prepare themselves in order to teach in the Montessori way. This can be done through guidance by their teacher trainers and by mentors at their schools.

**Transformational Process**

The transformational process is a delicate and unique individualized procedure. Having caring mentorship, a learning focused education, growth through work and experiences can help a teacher be productive in this process of shifting perceptions in pursuit of becoming an accomplished teacher.



Complexity Theory



Community

**METHODS**

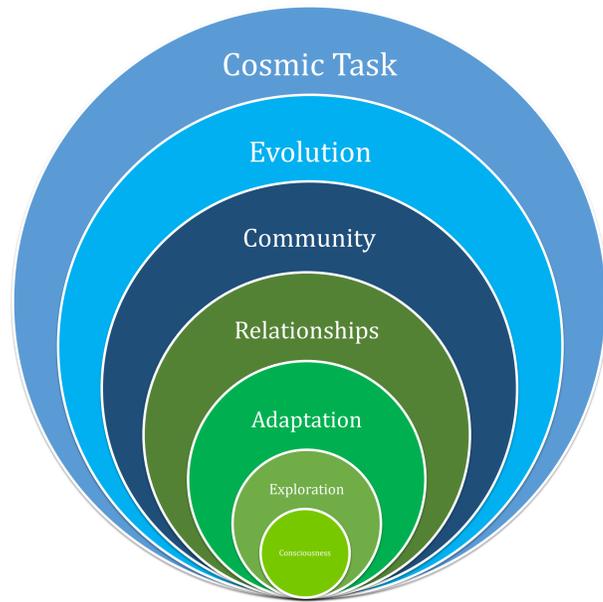
**Participants**

Three private school Montessori teachers with different years of teaching experience were interviewed. Additionally, a seven question survey was given to 27 Montessori educators from across the United States of America. I kept a personal reflective researcher’s journal.

**Data Collection**

The genre of qualitative research was a phenomenological study to help others understand the unique experience of being a Montessori teacher.

To bring trustworthiness and validation to my study, I used triangulation, researcher reflexivity, thick rich description, collaboration, and prolonged engagement in the field. (Creswell and Miller, 2000)



**Data Analysis**

In the process of comparing my data I found that many of the themes explored in my literature review showed up in my findings. I also saw that these themes had more depth and richness in their connections that went previously unnoticed. The main themes that I noticed were: metamorphosis, cosmic task, and evolution. Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

**Limitations**

This research was done with such few individuals in a localized area; hence, it did not show a clear picture of a variety of Montessori teacher education programs around the world.

**FINDINGS**

This research found that there were corresponding conditions the teachers recalled which became themes including; importance of community and relationships, a sense of adaptation, exploration, consciousness and a desire for evolution.

**Community and Relationships**

Trust, respect and interest led the burgeoning teachers to explore something that they had not previously considered.

**Adaptation**

Teachers who went through a Montessori teacher education program and a full year practicum had a transformational experience that involved the idea of a deep inner work.

**Exploration**

Along with humility came a sense of curiosity and exploration. When realizing that they didn’t know everything, teacher trainees were open and willing to learn something new and different.

**Consciousness**

When there is deliberate looking inward and working on becoming a more conscious and conscientious human being, Montessori teacher trainees are transformed.

**Evolution**

As Montessorians, we envision our students being lifelong learners and we work at being an example for them to follow. This value was referred to by others in the study and in my own reflections.



Humility

“In addition, my love and respect for each human as an individual is attributed to Montessori. “



Curiosity

“part of the spiritual transformation is being upheaved”

“It continues to be humbling because I continually see that I don’t know everything and that there is much to learn”



Lifelong Learning

**IMPLICATIONS**

It is not simply for a Montessori teacher to learn the pedagogy and curriculum of the theory, but to embark on a spiritual transformation that at its roots is empathetic to all life and honors the value of the entirety of the cosmos.

**Future Research**

**Teacher Education Programs**

TEPs should consider ways to foster connections and relationships, as this was the most referenced component of the transformational experience.

**Teachers In Training**

For those brave and determined enough to embark on a training that is meant to change your perception of yourself and the world, my recommendation would be to seek out others that inspire and guide you.

**Intensive vs. Longevity Programs**

It would be interesting to see if attending an online program or spreading the program over a longer period of time would affect the trainee’s experience of transformation.

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