



## 2015 Educateurs sans Frontières Assembly – NOTES

**Date: 3 August 2015**

**Topic: Opening Session**

**Presenter: Lynne Lawrence**

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#### HOUSEKEEPING

Internet: Meals: Who to go to for help:

Explanation of contents of packet – evaluation form & video release form

#### VIDEO DIARY

We would like one person each day to take the flip video, which will give them 2 hours of video time to capture meaningful snippets, interviews, shots of campus etc. The camera will need to be downloaded at the end of the day and returned for recharging.

#### GENERAL PATTERN OF EACH DAY

On discussion days we will occasionally begin together, or divide into smaller groups to read and discuss a variety of aspects of Dr Montessori's writing and work and relate this every day to our developing ideas. At the end of each day we will come together to synthesise our ideas and create a plan for deeper thinking and application. The groups may read and discuss, may have questions posed for them to consider and will generally gather ideas that can be captured so that at the end of the two weeks ideas, actions and next steps will have been gathered and can be distributed.

On the days when we have guest speakers – the morning will be spent listening to our speakers and we will have the opportunity to discuss with them and the afternoon will be more informal in discussion groups applying our principles and asking questions.

#### WHITEBOARD

Use the whiteboard to create an ideas board.

If you wish to try something different from the format for discussions that are being used then please let us know.

If you find yourself with others who would enjoy discussion on a particular topic feel free to let us know and either it can be integrated into the day or you can continue with special groups during the evenings.

## EVENINGS

There will be the opportunity to look at a variety of supporting DVD's in the evening and groups wishing to do this should request the DVD and may watch it on their computers.

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Legacy

Margaret Stephenson: Human Tendencies

Montessori: Pathways to Social Reform

Montessori In Action: Learning for Life

The Normalised Child

Montessori and Indigenous People

The Child in Nature

Spontaneous Concentration in the Montessori Prepared Environment

Discovering the Real Spiritual Child

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius

Music and Movement for Montessori Teachers x 2

## BEING TOGETHER

Preparation for service – and as Dr Montessori always said – we must begin by cultivating in ourselves those qualities that we would most expect to find in others.

These two weeks will allow us to develop the capacity to live well with others

To seek out the positive in each other and in our situations

It is too easy for us to listen without hearing – we must practice the art of listening to ‘the other’

We are the sum total of our experiences, the culture that we live in, the language that we speak, the parents that we had, the experiences we have had. Cannot help us but be prejudiced. Try to listen without bringing or trying not to bring all of our ‘I’ve done that’ – I understand ...too quickly, within the parameters of my own understanding! so let’s practice together, one of the key elements of success in what we do is genuinely being able to:

identify with the other,

listen to the other and putting ourselves

in relationship with the other

that is collaborative and open minded rather than too knowledgeable, and all knowing.

So let’s practice that while we are together, which means that every single voice in the room has something to say and we must listen for those voices because not every voice always speaks. Try when we are in discussion, breakfast – ensure that those that need encouragement to speak are encouraged, those that have no difficulty can stop and see if they are filling up the spaces.

Let us speak well of each other

So few of us trying to do such a huge amount of work we have not the luxury of discriminating against our neighbour. Let us speak well of each other even in disagreements. Let us state our positions without needing to defend ourselves.

Let us say that we must all walk together, let us share what we know with each other and let's listen to each other so that we will be the end of these 11 days that you just discovered what you already knew. Let us speak well of one another and others engaged in the work.

To listen openly to a diversity of perspectives

This invitation should be a beautiful and welcoming call to *contribute* rather than simply *participate*. It should note that one's contribution can come in many forms: listening, speaking, writing, hosting a table, etc., and that all contributions are important.

*Shared listening.* This means listening together for insights, patterns, or collective wisdom. Participants should discuss what they are hearing from each other to better identify insights not easily accessed by only one member. Encouraging time for reflection after each person speaks can assist with this.

Ideas at each table should be documented via words and/or drawings on the large sheet of paper that is over each tablecloth. Members can also place large Post-Its with key ideas on a wall or large board so that all members may view them together. These ideas can then be clustered into related themes or insights.

## MISSION

To work to support the natural development – what is the ESSENCE of from birth if we can do that then the children will become the transforming elements – children have the opportunity.

## GUIDELINES

Key principles – PRINCIPLES FOR LIFE that we can apply anywhere – and our work is to try and understand what those principles are in essence and how they can be applied.

We are not going to talk about Montessori materials. If we understand the principles then materials are only one aspect.

Take what we know beyond the borders of school.

Increase Access: OUT OF THE BOX – WE MUST GO BACK and look at Montessori – working for social reform