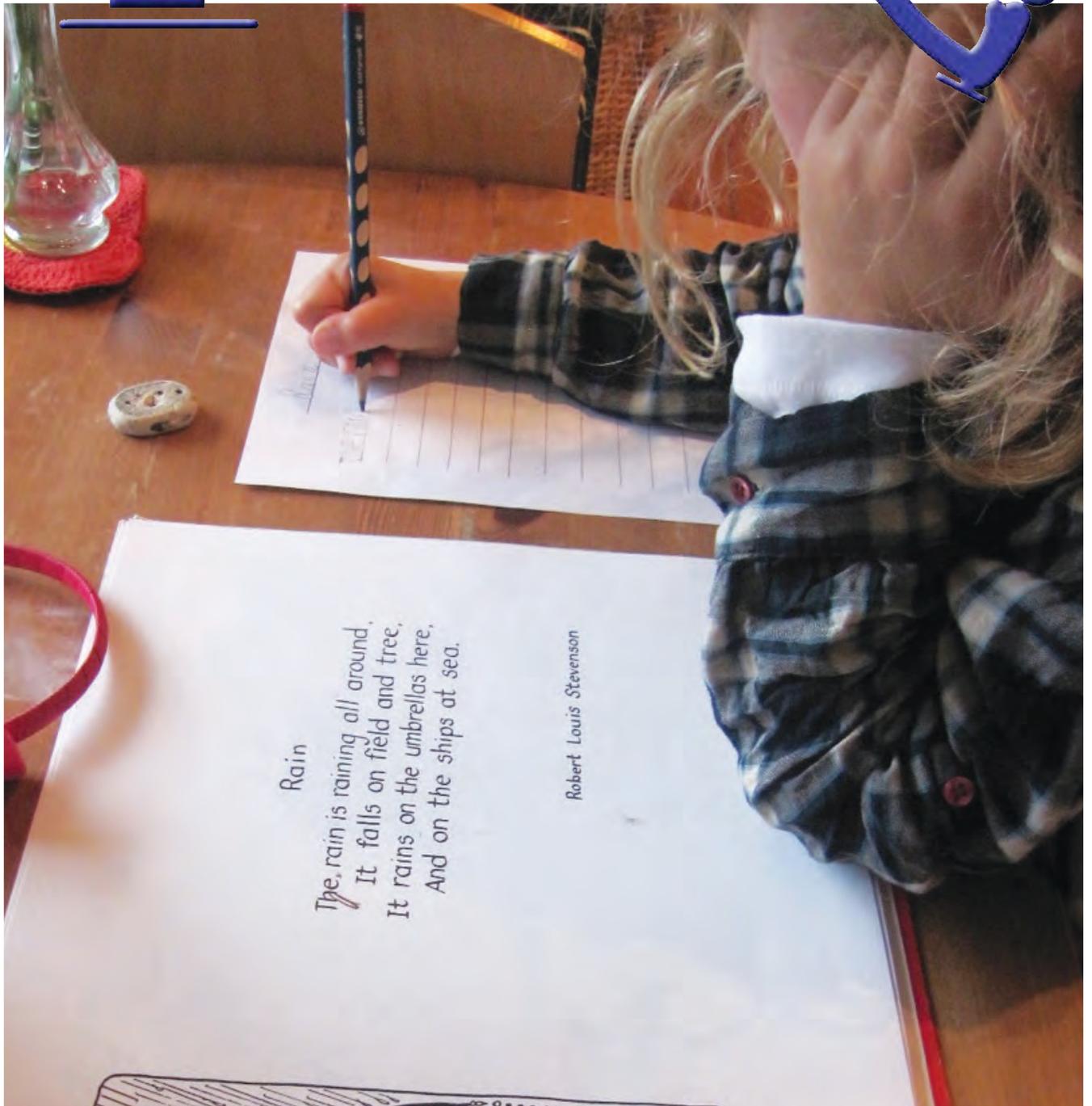




# Intrapersonal Intelligence



Inside: Happiness ● Intrapersonal intelligence ● A calm environment for Toddlers ● Social development starts in the Children's House ● Search for knowledge in Primary ● Reflections and study in the Secondary Section ● At home - adjusting logical limits ● The importance of the outdoor

# Happiness



## People are in pursuit of happiness, we all hope for love and peace!

What is happiness actually? It is such a hard concept to define, since it is abstract but simultaneously so realistic when it soars through one's body. Can happiness be a permanent state or is it made up of fleeting moments?

Edward de Bono seeks it in his book, 'Simplicity'. He states that, "from complexity come stress, anxiety and frustration". Simplicity makes life easier and more enjoyable. Our minds can be freed from intricate details and can instead focus on feelings. Happiness is often there, but is blocked from coming to the surface due to an anxious state of being.

John Dewey seeks happiness in social harmony. He defines it by looking at social relationships, related needs of self and others, "because all men want to be happy, it hardly follows that every man wants all to be happy".

Daniel Goleman made a deep study of Emotional Intelligence. He put emphasis on the two sides of the human mind, the rational and the emotional. Both need the right guidance and environment to develop. Developing only one will result in an unbalanced personality. The rational and emotional sides of the brain are counterparts necessary to do well in life and to become happy.

These trains of thought and theory emphasise different aspects of the same idea. They acknowledge the importance of respecting and nurturing the Multiple Intelligences inherent in humans. Using Howard Gardner's terminology on Multiple Intelligences, we can see that Edward de Bono puts an emphasis on the Logical Intelligence, John Dewey on the Interpersonal Intelligence and Daniel Goleman on Intrapersonal Intelligence.

Maybe we experience happiness the most when we have aspects of all intelligences developed.

# Intrapersonal Intelligence



**We are all different. Everyone experiences aspects of life in different ways. This depends on many factors such as personality, cultural background, values in life and family roots.**

It also depends on the balance of the reasoning mind and emotional mind. Do we listen to our intuition? Do we think that living by rational thinking is the way to go?

The Intrapersonal Intelligence has not been seen as important within the standard education system, nor for a long time in the world at large. However, now we know that within marketing, sales, leadership and other business practices we cannot do without this Emotional Intelligence. Successful people have a combination of skills. They are good logical thinkers, but also listen to their 'gut feelings'.

Howard Gardner finds that this Intelligence is a base to our functioning. When we understand ourselves and listen to our feelings, fears, values, interests and motivations, this results in an 'effective working model' of ourselves. It gives the possibility to use information that comes from the Emotional Mind to help regulate our lives. By listening to one's feelings one acknowledges oneself. The art is then to balance this with the other Intelligences and consequently make wise decisions.

Being able to listen to oneself cannot be developed in isolation'. Our emotional world mirrors our experiences from our youth. It mirrors the opinion other people had and have about us. It mirrors the level of acceptance by others of our true self.

We all know the story of a son wanting to become an artist and his father who pushes him to go into law. But that is not where it starts. It starts with babies who need a lot of movement but are contained in Maxicosis. It could be toddlers who need a quiet environment but have overexposure to television. It is also our Primary children who need time in nature but find themselves behind the computer, or teenagers who need a level of independence, but have their whole day planned by someone else.

It is not an easy task to accept someone else for whom they really are. This is because sometimes the core is hard to see. However, using Mark Wahl's terminology in the book 'Math for Humans', when the adult is a Beaver, it does not mean all his/her children are Beavers. They might be Owls, or Dolphins or Foxes and need a totally different approach. Accepting people for who they truly are is a sign of a strong Intrapersonal Intelligence. Our children depend on us, as their parents and educators, to form a framework that allows for differences and gives logical limits that helps them towards a balanced overall development.

### **Strengths particular to this intelligence**

People with a strong Intrapersonal Intelligence are used to looking inward and figuring out their own feelings. They know their inner motivation and their own personal goals. They are introspective, deep thinkers and try to understand. They are intuitive, know the value of their intuition and act accordingly. To other people they might seem introverted and less communicative. However, fewer words often describe a full event.

Further characteristics are:

- Philosophical
- Critical thinking
- Self-aware
- Introspective: deep analysis of one's own strengths and weaknesses
- Independent
- Prefers working alone
- Spends time reflecting
- Enjoys analysing theories and ideas
- Perfectionistic
- Precise
- Eye for details
- Often creative

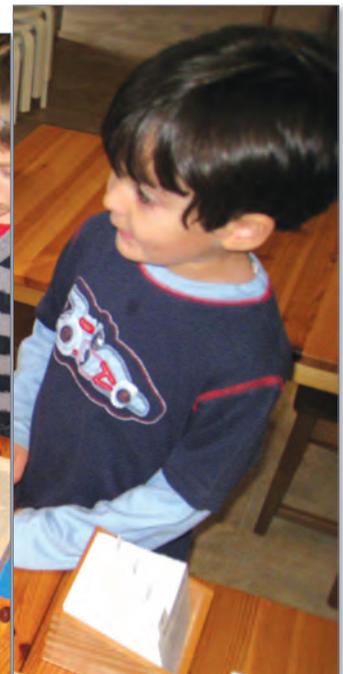
### **Possible Career Choices**

- Author
- Researcher
- Theorist
- Scientist
- Librarian
- Therapist
- Philosopher



# Intrapersonal Intelligence in the Montessori class

The different Intelligences form part of our character. We have strengths and weaknesses on which we can work during a lifetime. Skills can be developed and the personality evolves. These different aspects of a personality can be represented horizontally in a grid. Now the same Intelligences can be noted vertically in the same grid. Irrelevant of our character, we sometimes work and develop more through one intelligence than an other. As an example; I can have a predominant Logical- Mathematical Intellect but when I write my book, I find myself in a state of Intrapersonal Intellect. I need and can apply this state in order for me to make my writing happen. And so it is also in childhood. Depending on the stage of development, the child is in a different state of mind. Interestingly, life starts (and maybe ends?) with the Intrapersonal Intellect state of being.



# A Calm environment for Toddlers



Life progresses through different stages. Montessori called these the planes of development. In each plane, different aspects that form the personality develop. This can also be said for the Intelligences. Not every Intelligence develops at an equal age, equal intensity and in an equal manner.

Growth needs gentle and appropriate coaching. The environment that is provided needs to vary according to the developmental needs of the children. Also the toys, the approach, the level of freedom and appropriate limits needs to change alongside.

During the period of 0 to 3 years old, babies and toddlers function very much through the Intrapersonal Intelligence. It is the time when the child focuses only on him/herself. This stage of self-development is very intense at this time, with the brain being very flexible and wiring up neurons in accordance to experiences received. Because of this period of self-construction, the child cannot be in tune with others yet. Social development and the related Interpersonal Intelligence, develops from approximately age three onwards. Therefore

sharing is a foreign concept to toddlers, this conscious act belongs to an 'older mind'.

Children under the age of three function at an unconscious level. They absorb the world around them: languages, values, mannerisms, patterns in relationships and so on. They observe. The brain takes in this information without filter since filters can only develop with increasing life experiences. This is why toddlers are so honest, direct, and pushy when their need is not met. They are intense when someone else takes something from them that they need at that point in time. These characteristics are tools for self-development. When the adults use appropriate language and limits, these behaviours slowly change and the child becomes confident, knows what he/she wants, without it having negative consequences for others.

The adults play a very important role. Toddlers need space and time that allows them to be introverted. They need to have a feeling that time is in abundance, even though the adults know that this is not the case. Young children do not need to be hurried by the adult's anxieties. The information, "now it is time to go home", can be given at the right moment, so that the child had a feeling of limitless time.



Within the time available, the child can interact with the environment and the people and thus construct him/herself. Appropriate space and equipment is also needed. The space should not include any electronic devices, since language needs to be absorbed from people. Language is a foundation that binds people together and therefore is directly related to the development of other characteristics, especially the development of self-esteem. The unconscious message that is absorbed is, "my mummy looks at me when I communicate, I am acknowledged" and "dad let's me set the table with him, I am an important member of this household, because I do important work!"

Equipment that is scaled to the size of the child and that are copies of objects used by the adults give similar messages. Young children love to do what the adults do. Providing scaled objects ensure success.

One of the tools of the Intrapersonal Intelligence is concentration. The basis of which is being

developed during these early ages. A peaceful environment enhances this process. It is actually very simple; concentration develops when the child gets the chance to concentrate on appropriate activities in a calm surrounding. When there is an overstimulation through non-related noises and actions such as, parents on the phone, television on and iPads with 'baby' games, it is difficult for the brain to come to a state of concentration and flow.

The first three years are set aside for intense growth. Allowing young children to mainly function

through their Intrapersonal Intelligence during these years greatly assists the foundation of the personality.

Around the age of three a lot changes. The child has built up life experiences through working with his/her hands, observations and interactions. Due to this a level of integration of mind, body and will has been obtained. First, all aspects develop parallel to each other, now the personality becomes more integrated and the child sees the world through 'other eyes'. They start to say "I", become aware of the fact that they are separate beings from their mother and slowly move towards a functional conscious mind.

This conscious mind slowly becomes aware of the fact that other people have needs too! The temper tantrums disappear and willful behaviour can be directed to the positive. Of course the development continuous, the child starts to function less through the Intrapersonal Intelligence. The Interpersonal Intelligence starts to wake up and the child grows towards a social being.

# Social development starts in the Children's House



Somewhere halfway the age of 0 to 6, the young child's functioning of the mind changes. Parents feel the difference. First the child was developing language, movement, will, and intellect all parallel to each other. Now integration is taking place and the child becomes more conscious of the environment and the people within. This is the time where adults and older children can help the child in starting develop social awareness.

Concretely this means giving a new set of limits. What was appropriate to the 'unconscious' child is not appropriate to this 'conscious' child anymore. The toddler could water the pavement with the watering can and it was totally appropriate because he/she was in a state of concentration, developing gross motor skills and developing eye-hand movements. However, now that the child is conscious the adult needs to say, "the water is for the plants." Activities need to be directed to a logical level, since this helps the child to develop the neocortex by means of many logical activities with cause and effect.



Toddlers should not be encouraged to share and definitely not 'forced' to share since they are in a phase of intense self-development. Now that the children are a little older, they learn that others have needs too. The young child was left on the swing till the need was satisfied. Now it is time to say: "10 more swings up and down

and then it is Johnny's turn". The limit setting helps logical thinking develop. Should we keep the limited amount of boundaries as we did for the younger child, the preschool child does not get a chance to develop socially and can become limitless in action and in thinking.

In the Children's House, Practical Life activities are of great importance to accomplish this process of integration and the start of social awareness. The activities itself provide several logical steps and limits. By means of suitable vocabulary, the adult further adds appropriate limits such as, "the brush is only for sweeping" (instead of lifting it up). "The fruit can be eaten at the fruit table," (instead of walking and eating simultaneously).

The word 'no' is not used so often, since a young child does not have the ability to think abstractly yet. They cannot think yet "She says no, do not run, so she wants me to walk slowly". The child is greatly assisted by receiving instructions on what is the correct behaviour and this in a positive manner. Valuable here at school is the multi-age group. Children learn so much more from each other than from adults. This of course only takes place when children are at different ages and consequently different levels of awareness.

"No", is a word we keep for safety and urgency. When the word no is used in a limited version,



children learn to listen and respond to it. When it is repeatedly used, children get used to it and become oblivious. They just don't listen, since they know it will be repeated again.

Now let's have a look at those children who have come out of the early Intrapersonal stage with a great empathy towards and strength in the Intrapersonal Intellect. These children might not become social as early as children who are extrovert. They might shy away from groups activities and work mostly independently. They might want to be carried longer by mum or have difficulty in saying goodbye during transit times. These children should be recognised as such and given the opportunity to feel good about themselves as they are. They need additional reassurance to gain in trust and confidence. They also should have the ability to withdraw now and then in a reading corner or work on an individual table. Simultaneously they need a level of coaching in order not to become too introverted. As is with all Intelligences, too much is not a good thing. In this case it can hinder the development of trust in the self, social development and feeling good with others. This in its turn could have later effect on integration in a group, ability to work in teams and ability to start relationships.

So it is again up to the adults to help the child develop balance. First of all it is important in accepting who the child really is, secondly we can work on developing other characteristics by gentle coaching and appropriate activities. The role of the teachers is very important here. In the Montessori classroom, teachers are in tune with every child and put different 'ingredients' into their specific interactions. As an example when the teacher plans a painting activity at the picnic table outside, the introverted child will be asked to come along. This exiting event will tip the fear of joining the group and thereby help the child gain trust in that working in a group is not threatening at all.

Extroverted children are sometimes asked to work alone and introverted children are enthused to join the group in different ways. This can be through many activities such as preparing fruit for others, serving at lunch time, choosing the song that the group is going to sing, important jobs such as helping the teacher to hang up posters or saying goodbye to friends at the gate. In daily life, these activities look totally unimportant, however every moment, interaction, verbal comment and body language helps the child to grow!

# Search for knowledge in Primary

Development does not happen in a straight line as is traditionally believed, but in a series of steps. At each platform, different aspects develop more intensely than others.

During the previous period it was first integration of body, will and movement and then the start of social development and awareness. Now in Primary the child becomes aware of the world at large. They want to know how and when and why and where? The Primary child's brain has now developed an intricate neuro-network due to six years of life experiences and now the brain can slowly use this information and build upon it without actually needing to experience it hands on. This is the concept of imagination! It is a huge characteristic that brings the human being beyond the mammals. We have a neocortex that can learn to think abstractly when given age appropriate information, limits and experiences.

The child with a strong Intrapersonal Intelligence now has an important brain-tool. Reading, drawing,

writing and creative constructions are favourites of the strong Intrapersonal person. They are a bit like an Owl, they like to withdraw and discover. They often have a very good concentration and urge of wanting to know. They feed their thirst of knowledge through books, magazines, museums and internet. They prefer to do this by themselves and not be bothered.

This urge of wanting to know is present in all children. However, the intensity, ways of acquiring and related communication patterns differ. The challenge for Intrapersonally strong children is not to become completely and only focused on that. Traditionalists would think these are the 'best' students, however when receiving only one-sided stimulation they might become loners and anti-social.

In the Montessori classroom they are challenged by being asked to work with a friend and discussing ideas. Initially they can come up with a product made by two children and later expand and work on a project with several students, so that they learn to feel good within a team. They are also asked to present it to a larger public such as during 'Windows in the Class' events. Other opportunities are created through math activities that require two or more people collaborating, through gym



in needing to organise the balls for the activity, through games during playtime and by means of phoning with the appropriate organisations to arrange a field trip.

Also in Primary, each child receives a 'personalised package of challenges'. Children change and grow all the time through that. A lot of development happens during the five years of Primary. In the first years a lot of attention goes towards the development of basic skills, concentration, work habits and responsibility. After a couple of years in Primary these different abilities integrate again to a higher level. The outcome of that can be seen in the last years of Primary. These are often calm years full of positive outward signs. In order to obtain the best possible result, it is important that parents and teachers work together and value the importance of all previous steps.

Just a little word on appropriate limits and boundaries at this age. The Primary child is very different from the Preschool child. Suddenly parents are shocked that their little boy has been hit or was in a quarrel started by himself. They think this is not possible; the other party must have surely started

it? One must not confuse the two sides of the grid. The preschool child is in an Intrapersonal stage needed for self-construction, but not all children are predominantly Intrapersonal Intelligent. When they come out of this stage they might very well be Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligent who (of course) do not know yet what is right and wrong, and act accordingly! Luck is, they enter a new stage in which morality is developing. Between 6 and 12 one of the big developmental sensitivities is to find out what is right and wrong. What is accepted by the others and what do I accept myself? This is part of the social development and develops through conflicts and experiences. When we try to avoid this stage and act for the child, he/she misses an opportunity for growth.

One can use the skill of Imagination to predict how it could have gone different. "What if you would have done... maybe you two would not have gotten angry", What if you and Johnny would have talked about the matter..." These types of discussions match the child's developmental stage and will help the development of logical thinking and decision-making. After all, if there are 8 Intelligences, we can use one in service of the other.



# Reflections and study in the Secondary Section

And then they become teenagers! A beautiful age with intense development. Slowly but surely, children become adults. First in body and then in mind! Our complex society has made it as such that young people still need to be in school and live with their parents for many years. Now there can be a discrepancy, since these youths can do a lot, yet are still often instructed and 'contained' by adults.



However, it is very important that there is a balance:

- Limits are set appropriately
- Expectations match the age
- The adolescent needs to feel the consequences of their own behaviour (not mum, dad, teachers, friends etc.)
- Child learns to own his 'problems' and needs to be helped to become responsible for his/her own actions

Simultaneously:

- The teenager needs appropriate independence
- Needs appropriate decision making opportunities within the realm of everyday life
- Needs to have a framework where he/she feels that 'the freedom ends where the freedom of someone else begins'.
- This framework differs per child, depending on their level of logical thinking, rational behaviour and level of responsibility taken.

This is unfortunately the age when, if the balance provided is not right then large problems can come to the surface.

An introverted child cannot be allowed to spend hours and hours behind the screen doing games: Xbox, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. There is so much social media out there that the child actually does not need to talk to anymore to anybody in real life situations. Extraverts will balance these activities automatically since they love contact with other people; they like to chat, giggle, eat together and so on. Bodily Kinesthetic individuals will balance it too with lots of sports. However, it is especially the person with a strong Intrapersonal Intelligence that we need to take care of here and set the right limits. Otherwise they withdraw too much and will start lacking social interactions and skills.

Each plane is based on the previous one. During this plane of development individuals can grow to a higher level of understanding. The developmental sensitivity goes towards wanting to understand society at large. They want to know how society works, and how they will fit into it. They are seeking answers to the question why. They are thinking about thinking. This then reaches a higher level of abstraction and can lead to deep insights into values and judgments towards themselves, others and societies at large.

This overall sensitivity matches certain characteristics of the Intrapersonal Intelligence. One can see that clearly in teenagers. To a certain degree they go back into a cocoon to reinvent and



find themselves. They can come out as butterflies when the right balance of ingredients is present in their environment:

- Appropriate input
- Positive environment without typical value judgments of youth
- Reciprocal relationships with the adults
- Definitely the appropriate limits
- Assistance in overall development: social, intellectual, emotional, physical. Not allowing them to go too far in any direction. Balance is the key word.

Appropriate input does not mean only academics. Teenagers have many questions about self and others, and to stimulate this development, at school teenagers of different ages live, work and eat together. Of course they do not do the same academic work, they work at their Grade level. But they observe each other, talk a lot, interact with people of different abilities and set limits for

each other. This life in a diverse group stimulates personal development enormously.

Also within the curriculum, attention is given to the developmental sensitivities of this age range. Currently the students work on an Interdisciplinary unit with the topic 'Identity'. The guiding question is: Do our beliefs shape our identity? This topic is strongly related to Intrapersonal Intelligence. It provides 'home ground' for those who are strong at this intellect and an opportunity for developing skills for those who would rather avoid these intra-perspectives. Teachers and students will be discussing origins, religions, family backgrounds, social background and much more.

The different subjects deal with the same topic but from different points of view. This offers a large variety of information and research to the students. It therefore also helps with the integration of knowledge previously received. Have a look at the wealth of information they deal with in just four of the subjects:

Languages A, English and French	Science	Humanities	Languages B
Students will understand what defines identity and how to understand themselves and each other better.	Students will understand how biology can bring us closer to a part of our identity.	Students will understand how environments and religions and other beliefs can shape the self.	Students will understand how cultural identity develops through language.
<p><b>Various books:</b></p> <p>Reading, analysing the characters, definition of identity, difference between fiction and non-fiction,</p> <p>Importance of</p> <p>Writer's choice,</p> <p>Writing process,</p> <p>Dialogues</p> <p>Relevant details in relating stories</p> <p>Explore the autobiography and write a short one</p> <p>Discover what makes you what you are.</p> <p>Poetry about the self</p> <p>Research different poems</p> <p>Self-reflection Journal</p>	<p>On the discovery to our identity, we will first study animal and human communication mechanisms by comparing different animals communication styles. Then we will study the different ways our body uses to express these communication skills.</p> <p>"How do animals communicate?"</p> <p>"How do we communicate?"</p> <p>"Which parts of your tongue respond to different tastes?"</p> <p>"How well can you hear?"</p> <p>"How sensitive is our skin?"</p> <p>"How to pass the sense stimuli forward to the brain nerves and brain?"</p>	<p>World religions: Appreciations, rituals, visits of temples, mosque.</p> <p>Share one's beliefs and see how it changes our identity.</p> <p>Perform research about religions around the world (years 1-2)</p> <p>Erosion of classical civilisation,</p> <p>Birth of Europe: Roman civilisation crisis, decline and fall of Roman Empire, Romans' legacy, invasions, Christianity, Islam, Carolingians, rebirth and failure of imperialism, birth of monotheist and religions, values attached to them</p>	<p>Read various stories about immigrants</p> <p>Observe our behavior when we travel.</p> <p>Different videos</p> <p>Debates about stereotypes.</p>

People with a strong Intrapersonal Intelligence will do very well on the reflection side. For other students this can be a challenge, as e.g. the Bodily Kinesthetic likes to move on. That is the nature of teaching in the Montessori school and the IB philosophy; provide a large variety so that everyone can find what they are good at and simultaneously develop their 'other sides'!

This interdisciplinary unit on identity will conclude with a multicultural brunch for parents and students of the secondary section. It will be held on Saturday morning January 19, from 10.30 a.m. The students will bring a specialty from their culture and explain a ritual, belief or tradition linked to their background. A good challenge for the Intrapersonal Intelligence people!



# At home - adjusting logical limits

Wouldn't we all like to have a peaceful home environment all of the time? Most people have busy jobs, full weeks and never enough time. However, unfortunately it needs to be said that a conflict can be a moment of growth for children. In family life, we should not try to work for peace all the time and deflect children's attention so that possible conflicts are avoided.

The parent is the most experienced person in the house. When mum or dad feel uncomfortable about children's behaviour, limits need to be set. Children grow through 'love and logic'. The logic needs to be present in the form of logical limits.

These should differ for every age. Depending on the developmental stage, limits need to change. What is appropriate for a two year old is not appropriate for a six year old. This is the same for when a child grows from primary to secondary age. The developmental stage changes, and so should the setting of the boundaries.

A two year old can break a castle in the sandpit made by others, because she is not aware yet of the

needs of others. The adult does comment though by saying; "Ohh, that is a shame, let's build another one". But a four year old cannot be allowed to do this, since the level of awareness has changed and the child needs to become sensitive to the needs of others.

A six year old can bring a colouring book to the family's preferred restaurant and start to colour after the meal is over. However a ten year old is old enough to have a conversation with the others for the duration of the evening. The new mode is that children bring electronics to restaurants. All they do is eat and then withdraw into themselves.

The adults are missing an important opportunity of social and communicative development within the child. Should this particular child in this example be an extrovert, the effect of missing these opportunities is not so big. However, should the child have a strong Intrapersonal Intelligence, repetitive lack of opportunities can have a negative effect on the harmonious development, since they need social interactive stimulation.



# The importance of the outdoors



A common trait of Intrapersonal Intelligence is that these people love to be in the outdoors. Being in contact with nature is very important. Unfortunately promoted entertainment is for the indoors; movies, music, internet, games, phones, mini computers for preschoolers, iPads and so on. Of course, these products are good for the economy. Outdoor play, walks and looking for insects have therefore moved to the background? Simultaneously a culture of fear for others has been created. Do you still see children play outside after school in your neighbourhood? It is very quiet from that point of view; they are not often out there in the fields anymore, building huts, dragging branches and getting wet feet.

Being in nature can have an enormous calming effect. Introverts need it desperately, it is the way to calm emotions and regroup their thought. It is also good for all other Intelligences. Outdoor play and activities offers opportunities to communicate, invent, set rules of the game, get wet and dirty and feel very satisfied and hungry when coming home. Worth a try again for young and old!

## *Good Goggles:*

[www.multipleintelligencetheory.co.uk](http://www.multipleintelligencetheory.co.uk)

## *Good books available in the schools' Parent Library:*

Simplicity by Edward de Bono

Dictionary of Education by John Dewey

Our babies, ourselves – How biology and culture shape the way we parent by Meredith F. Small

Failure to connect – How computers affect our children's minds and what we can do about it by Jane M. Healy

Your child's growing mind by Jane M. Healy

From Innocence to Entitlement – Love and Logic by Jim Fay

Taking the stress out of raising great kids by Jim Fay

Parenting teens with Love and Logic by Foster Cline and Jim Fay.

The Emotional Life of the Toddler by Alicia Lieberman

Math for humans – teaching math through the 8 intelligences by Mark Wahl