



Google Discovers the Value of a Montessori Education

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Academic + Social-Emotional Intelligence = Success

What can a high-tech company like Google learn from a Montessori classroom at SMS?

In 2012, Google used their significant resources to launch *Project Aristotle*, a study of hundreds of Google teams which searched for common attributes of high functioning teams. Researchers were initially puzzled. They found that although many different kinds of teams worked well together, attributes of one successful team might be at odds with those of another. There seemed to be dozens of important behaviors, but the combination of those behaviors was different in each group. Upon closer inspection, researchers discovered two characteristics common to all successful teams: each team member was afforded equal “air time” to share his or her opinion; and the teams were comprised of individuals who had high “social sensitivity.” In other words, they could “read the room” and adjust their own behavior appropriately to help the team move forward. Remember, both the highly functioning and poorly functioning teams were comprised of intelligent people. So, the difference between being able to apply one’s intelligence in a team setting came down to social skills.

Google discovered something that teachers at Shrewsbury Montessori School have known from the outset. We view education as more than just academic progress. At the same time, we pay close attention to children’s emotional intelligence and explicitly teach them how to work cooperatively, how to “read the room,” and how to interact appropriately to create a positive learning environment. When visiting our classrooms you will see:



- Teachers using a wide variety of on-going informal and formal assessments which allow lessons and work to be calibrated to meet the needs and interest of each child.
- Children as young as three years old choosing their own “work.”
- Children working both alone and together, asking peers if they can join an activity, learning to respect the space and the answer they receive.
- Older children acting as mentors to younger children in mixed aged classrooms which span three years.
- Relaxed and focused children working for extended periods of time during a daily 2½ hour work period.
- Children using conflict resolution skills as a group during class meetings and one on one.

This combination of fine-tuned academic and social-emotional instruction results in graduates who excel in middle school, high school and beyond. Too often, the general public gives little credence to the emphasis on social skills in school and deems them niceties that detract from academic success. As Google discovered, teaching and emphasizing social-emotional intelligence is not an extra, it is a requirement for success in the modern workforce.

To learn more about Google’s Project Aristotle and its quest to build the perfect team, you can follow this link to the [February 28, 2016 New York Times Magazine article](#).

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