

# 2021 Montessori Association of North Carolina Virtual Conference

## Administrator's Summit

Friday, October 8, 2021, 1-6pm

**Catherine Massie**



**Title:** Montessori and the Science of Reading

**Overview:** In Montessori classrooms, we find that there are many children who do not independently progress to writing and reading fluency as we expect them to with the Montessori Language Curriculum. Catherine will discuss what the Science of Reading tells us about the match between the developmental needs of children in relation to their “reading brain” and the Montessori Language Curriculum. Understanding the Science of Reading, she argues, can assist Montessori teachers by providing a more precise lens to observe, serve, support and accommodate the needs of each individual child's literacy development. Through early identification, intervention and collaboration, we can lead all children to Montessori's goal of Total Reading.

**Tammy Oestig**



**Title:** Acclimating Support Staff to the Montessori Environment

**Overview:** Montessori environments are wondrous places directed by a team of adults prepared for their tasks; yet many schools and lead guides lack the time and expertise to fully acclimate the unsung heroes, the support staff, that ensure all systems run smoothly. Acclimate classroom assistants, before-and after-school staff, float staff, substitute staff, and administrators new to Montessori and your school culture, with a clear framework and tried-and-true strategies that enhance their performance.

These two presentations will be followed by:

1. Administrator's Panel Q & A
2. Reception

## **Montessori for All**

Saturday, October 9, 2021, 8:45am-3:30pm

Opening Keynote:



**Dr. Iheoma Iruka, Ph.D.**

Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D., is a Research Professor in the Department of Public Policy, a Fellow at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), and the Founding Director of the Equity Research Action Coalition at FPG at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Iruka is a developmental psychologist focused on

elevating the cultural wealth of Black and other minoritized children, families, and communities and addressing racism and other systemic inequities. Dr. Iruka serves on numerous national and local boards and committees. She is the mother of two young Montessorian children, ages 4 and 8.

## **Transforming Education through the Gift of Montessori: Centering Social Justice and Equity in Classrooms**

Education is often viewed as the one strategy to ensure equitable outcomes for children, especially children who have been historically marginalized from educational opportunities (e.g., Black children). Attending to educational equity is even more important as we come through the global pandemic. COVID-19 has shown that not all children are provided with equitable learning opportunities. Furthermore, the current education enterprise is rife with racism and system inequities from exclusion, workforce disparity to inequitable funding. As an approach grounded in equity and social justice, individualization, child development, and authentic assessment, Montessori is an approach ripe for centering in transforming education, including early education. This keynote will focus on how Montessori, an ideal learning approach, can instruct on how to ensure equitable outcomes by attending to access and experiences. Participants will be called on to examine how they activate fairness and justice in their classrooms, schools, and programs, and most importantly, dismantle structural racism and ensure equitable learning opportunities.

## **Following the keynote, choose from one of these 5 presentations; 10-11:15am breakout session #1.**



**Title:** Q & A with Dr. Iruka

**Overview:** In this session Dr. Iruka will answer any questions attendees may have about her keynote or those related to her keynote. She is very excited to explore her keynote topic further with you!

**Catherine Massie**



**Title:** Montessori & the Science of Reading

**Overview:** In Montessori classrooms, we find that there are many children who do not independently progress to writing and reading fluency as we expect them to with the Montessori Language Curriculum. Catherine will discuss what the Science of Reading tells us about the match between the developmental needs of children in relation to their “reading brain” and the Montessori Language Curriculum. Understanding the Science of Reading, she argues, can assist Montessori teachers by providing a more precise lens to observe, serve, support and accommodate the needs of each individual child's literacy development. Through early identification, intervention and collaboration, we can lead all children to Montessori's goal of Total Reading.

**Sarah Galley**



**Title:** Positive Discipline: Connection Before Correction

**Overview:** A founding principle in the Positive Discipline philosophy, connecting with a child before offering a correction offers the child validation and the tools to self-regulate successfully. We will explore this concept, highlighting the importance of attachment and we will develop hands on tools to use in the classroom that will encourage a sense of belonging and significance, leading to positive behavior.



**Katie Brown**



**Title:** Following All the Children: An Introduction to Child Study

**Overview:** Child Study is a Montessori-based approach to meeting the needs of all children, resolving difficulties early, and using a wide range of data to support student development, analogous to RTI or MTSS. A commitment to serving children through Child Study has the power to change a school's culture from deficit-based fault-finding to curiosity-based solution-finding. This workshop will provide an introduction to the theory underlying Child Study and an overview of the process at the classroom and school levels.

**Holly Ernest**



**Title:** Year-End Research Projects in Primary: Engage Your Graduating 5 + 6 Year Old's While Meeting State Kindergarten Standards

**Overview:** Although research projects typically do not enter the curriculum until children are considerably older, with a bit of modification the research process can be quite useful as a year-end project model for 5- and 6-year-olds "graduating" from Primary. This workshop offers a clear breakdown of the research project process, including how the process can be modified to meet the unique developmental needs of each student while also meeting important milestones for Common Core and other standards for Kindergarten ELA skills. Participants will leave with practical resources for introducing research projects.

Enjoy **lunch** while participating in one of these **Roundtable Discussions** with your Montessori colleagues: 11:40-12:40 am

1. Infant/Toddlers
2. Early Childhood
3. Elementary
4. Adolescent
5. Administrator

**Following lunch, choose 1 of these 4 presentations from 12:50-2:05pm; breakout session #2:**

**Christine Lowry**



**Title:** Challenging Behaviors: Reframing Our Approach – Session 1

**Overview:** The concern most often shared by teachers is how to manage challenging behaviors. In this 2-session workshop, participants will gain understanding of the reasons for these behaviors; and strategies, techniques, and tools for minimizing and addressing these challenging behaviors in the classroom.

**Susan Scheibenzuber**



**Title:** Writing Work That Promotes Literacy

**Overview:** Guide students ready to write with daily work and have them keep it in a journal. As formation skills are mastered offer work that promotes story writing, dictation, grammar and self-expression. Techniques will be shared to guide kindergarten students in small meetings to build skills. Beautiful Writing Materials will be used to demonstrate techniques that can be applied to any writing method. Journals allow students to self-regulate their work. Teachers have a visual record of all the student has written. Teachers can easily guide students **by looking at their work. Record keeping changes!**

**Claudia Mann**



**Title:** How to Make Observation the Key to Connection with Your Children and Your Most Consistent “Best Practice”!

**Overview:** Maria Montessori was a scientist who used observation to unearth her revolutionary discoveries in child development and revealed the methods we use to respond to that development. While observation is the tool that guides our understanding of the children we teach, regular and consistent observation seems to be a universally challenging “task” to accomplish. In this workshop, you’ll be introduced to new and updated tools and techniques that will have you not only practicing observation more reliably, but will free your time and energy for the activities you love to do with your students!

**Barbara Murphy**



**Title:** Turning Current Challenges into Learning Opportunities: A Montessori Physical Education Perspective

**Overview:** In this presentation, we will explore how to turn today’s challenges such as isolation and social distancing into opportunities for learning in areas like self-care, nature connectedness, solidarity and independence, while at the same time building physical literacy the Montessori way. And we will see how, in doing so, we are also helping children better navigate life in the current ‘new normal’ and post-pandemic future.

**And lastly, please choose 1 of these 4 presentations  
from 2:15-3:30; breakout session #3:**

**Christine Lowry**



**Title: Challenging Behaviors: Reframing Our Approach, Session 2**

**Overview:** The concern most often shared by teachers is how to manage challenging behaviors. In this 2-session workshop, participants will gain understanding of the reasons for these behaviors; and strategies, techniques, and tools for minimizing and addressing these challenging behaviors in the classroom.

**Pete Piche**



**Title** Mental Fitness for Montessori in Any Role

**Overview:** Would you like to increase your awareness and capacity to handle life's challenges with a positive, rather than a negative mindset? Come learn about mental fitness for Montessorians in any role, a set of practices that when applied can make you anti-fragile for the most difficult of challenges. The immediate benefits are the strengthening of an optimal attitude leading to skilled performance, an increased sense of well-being, and strengthening your ability to navigate all your relationships--even the difficult ones.



**Brooke Juneau**



**Title:** In This Together: Parenting with Families of Children with Developmental Differences

**Overview:** Early childhood educators can have an enormous impact on the trajectory of a child's development by intervening when developmental delays are suspected. However, raising concerns with parents can be among the most nerve-racking responsibilities we face. Why are these conversations so difficult, and is it really our place to initiate them? What happens "behind the scenes" in a family's life when a child is diagnosed with developmental differences? This presentation will give teachers the tools to navigate sensitive conversations with empathy; to forge positive partnerships with parents; and to recognize their critical role in supporting optimal development.

**Sally Meehan**



**Title:** Adolescent Community Building with a Campus Intensive Week

**Overview:** A strong community is key to the success of any Montessori adolescent program. This workshop will detail a powerful tool for building community: Campus Intensive Week. This experiential introduction to Montessori's Plan of Work and Study helps orient new students and refresh returning ones while creating fond memories and bonding adolescents to the campus and to each other.