

Maria Montessori

1870-1952

Maria Montessori

- First woman doctor in Italy, 1896
- First school, *Casa dei Bambini*, in Rome, 1907
- Method developed from her observations.
- *Do we, or should we, observe how children behave and adapt our teaching to what we see?*
- *Or do we attempt to change their behaviour to suit our teaching?*
- Worked initially with children with special needs, and with poor children.
- Overall aim to change the world: if we treat children with complete respect from birth, we will raise a different adult.
- Emphasised real things, not toys, and concrete materials
- Emphasised complete respect for the learner

Maria Montessori

- “Learning should not be an effort for children, a burden, or a tedious duty performed for the sake of the approval of someone in authority. On the contrary, it should result from a personal interest and involvement in the world, and an understanding of the meaning of things. When it does, a child is able to orient itself with regard to society, to the history of man and to the future.” Montessori

Strengths of Montessori Method

- Learners work alone or in groups
- Ethos of respect
- Freedom of choice around what to learn and how to learn
- Ability to move from concrete to abstract
- Encouragement of spontaneous activity

The design process

- Empathise
- Define
- Ideate
- Prototype

Prototype

- “A prototype can be *anything* that takes a physical form – be it a wall of post-it notes, a role-playing activity, a space, an object, an interface, or even a storyboard.”

Prototypes enable us to:

- Explore alternative possibilities
- Empathise
- Gain a deeper understanding
- Trial solutions

Your task:

- Using the material that's available, create a prototype of your solution, or solutions.
- Remember, the end product is less important than the process of developing it; your prototype doesn't need to be polished or beautiful or perfect, but it may embody insights that are helpful. It may also make you think in a different way.