

Cosmic Education

The Greek word *cosmic*, means "order and harmony" in the world, and on a more broad level, the universe. Opposite to "cosmic" would be "chaos". *Cosmic* presupposes the concept that all of the universe is collaborating in the still, evolving creation of everything that is. So, merely by its existence, every element of nature performs a task in maintaining a balance in the universe.

That task is two-fold; its first task is survival and its instinctual need to exist. Second, and usually unconsciously, is its cosmic task to contribute to the total harmony of the universe. For example; a bee collects nectar for its nourishment, but at the same time pollinates the flower for the proliferation of its role, or plants that through the process of making their own food, take in the carbon dioxide we give off and provide the oxygen we need for our survival.

Humanity is its own universal energy and has its own part to play in the Cosmic Drama, along with the water, wind, rocks, and other living things. As humans, we have for the most part, consciously fulfilled our needs for survival and continue to seek the best conditions for ourselves. Instinctively, we are driven to improve our surroundings in order to continue to exist. Early humans were more dependent upon nature for that survival where we have become more dependent on the work of other human beings. Physically we have joined humanity and perhaps are now preparing the next step to bring about a spiritual union. What we now do consciously to improve our circumstances may be at the same time, instinctively leading us to the spiritual oneness of all humanity, of which we are unconscious of at the moment. We have yet to grasp the realization of the unity of all and that where one is not allowed to function fully, slows down the progress of the whole.

What does this mean in terms of Montessori Education? Maria Montessori saw the child as the one cosmic agent through which our full progress as human beings is possible. So powerful is the role that she went onto say that it could happen within one generation! The child's role in cosmic creation is through education. The basic premise of Cosmic Education allows us to tie in and relate all elements of the curriculum to each other, so as not to teach each subject in isolation.

This education begins from infancy. In the first plane of development (0-6), the young child needs the freedom to explore and absorb the environment as their impulse drives them. The result is love and joy, with love being the spiritual essence of humans from which we build ourselves. The older child (6-12) must be given not only the world, but the universe and a vision of the cosmic role in the creation and maintenance of our globe. They need to realize the scope of the creation of all that is, and more narrowly, realize how humans came to this world and built the physical environment to where it is now. Furthermore, we must spark in them the awe of this process so as to take the next

step toward the ultimate goal of the spiritual union of humanity, which physically is already united.

The genius of Montessori's Cosmic Education makes it natural to relate all areas of knowledge to the concept of cosmic task and our relation to it. It is especially poignant to the aspect of history, for it is in going back in history and appreciating the cosmic labors of all that is living and non-living that brings the child to himself. Montessori so marvelously sought to accomplish this by capturing the inherent imagination of the child of this age and sharing the stories of what we call "The Great Lessons". These stories take us from the beginning of the universe to the present. Appealing to a child's sense of wonder and imagination, lofty visions of the cosmic task of creatures so humble as the earthworm stirs the mind as it speaks to the essential truths and mysteries which govern our common existence.

In conclusion, Cosmic Education leads us to the following concepts we may gain from and utilize in our understanding of the cosmos, along with our role as an evolving being within this universe. This understanding gives a more hopeful and meaningful perspective to our lives.

Peace: Peace, equality, and care of the earth are consciously pursued as one realizes the unity of all people and things in the universe. If everything in the universe came from the same source, uniting us with all things, then to harm another is to harm oneself.

Conservation: With the understanding that the universe is the "all" that there is, one can never really throw anything "away" because there is no "away". The earth in particular is home to us all and is itself a living, evolving entity.

Values: Human beings are the only known beings that have the heart and mind to contemplate our existence. Through our awareness and care we nurture and manage our lives and this planet, as well as awaken others to the splendor of all creation.

Hope: Hope is our ability to observe and assess a situation in a positive manner. Cosmic Education reinforces that despite much violence in the universe (fireballs, explosions, meteors colliding) and on planet Earth in particular (hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes, and wars) life still continues to progress toward a higher degree of complexity.

Gratitude: At the core of Cosmic Education is coming away with a sense of wonder and awe over years of evolutionary labor as the earth prepared itself for living things, including humans, and the thousands of years humans progressed to provide us with technology and comfort for which we now benefit.

Openness: In appreciation over all that the universe has progressed, one comes to the understanding that we are still amidst its progression and that the cosmos is still unfolding. The possibilities of further progression cause one to question the next step. If the universe is not stagnant, if the earth itself is a living, changing entity, where do we go from here? A sense of openness to all possibilities is fostered in Cosmic Education.

Cosmic Tasks: Like all particles of the universe, and as demonstrated in the Universe Story, we also follow the Law of Attractions; to people, passions, hobbies, and jobs to which our true self leads and demonstrates the unique aspects of our personalities. These attractions are a part of the unfolding of the cosmic plan of the universe. To follow those allurements or passions feeds the mission of the self to fulfill its purpose. Joseph Campbell's answer to living ones potential is to "follow your bliss".

Our job as teachers and parents is to be aware of our own passions, as well as a child's sensitive periods or "allurements" and provide opportunities to help them find and follow their passions. Their instinctive periods of interest may lead them to their meaningful work or cosmic task. If they see their lives in the framework of the cosmos, they may find their life more meaningful and satisfying.

Overview of History Curriculum

I. Concept of Time

- A. The Clock
- B. Timeline of a Day- linear measure of time
- C. Timeline of My Life
- D. The Year and Its Parts- a year divided into fractions
- E. BC/AD Timeline
- F. History and Grammar- past, present, future

II. Concept of History

- A. Fundamental Human Needs- Physical and Spiritual
 - 1. Chart
 - 2. Historical cards
- B. Vertical Presentation- evolution of one need
- C. Horizontal Presentation- each need studied for one time period

III. History of Life

- A. Formation of the Universe Story
- B. Coming of Life Story
 - 1. Timeline of Life
- C. Black Strip
- D. Clock of Eras
- E. Coming of Human Beings
- F. Hand Chart
- G. First Timeline of Humans
- H. Communication in Signs Story
- I. Story of Numbers