

08 16 2009 - The Montessori Effect

After finishing Malcolm Gladwell's most recent masterpiece, *Outliers*, which details success in relation to culture and opportunity, I decided to explore a small opportune phenomenon of my own. When I was a child, I attended Montessori school at the wishes of my parents. Essentially, the idea behind these schools is to expose children to new ideas and individual learning experiences from an early age to create well-rounded individuals with a unique desire to learn. While I didn't know it at the time, my days at Montessori were beginning to shape the way in which I interact with and view the world even today.

Today, I've developed a case of serial entrepreneurship. I can't stop starting things. I always try to see them through but, if one idea fails, I've got another three lined up to take its place. Given my own experiences with the benefits of Montessori, I decided to do some research to discover whether or not this effect was noticeable in other Montessori graduates and, sure enough, it is.

Bill Clinton, Yo Yo Ma, Larry Page & Sergey Brin (the founders of Google), and others are among the many successful graduates of the Montessori method. Of course, it would be a bit far fetched to say that the schools caused these people to become who they are today. But, it would also be a little bit off the map to say that the schools had nothing to do with it. I suspect that if Gladwell were to take a look at it, he would agree that, indeed, the exposure of children to new ideas and strong individualism at such an early age creates a foundation that allows people to succeed when presented with the opportunities that help them excel.

His book, *Outliers*, is a fascinating exploration into the factors that underlay success. In a book a little thicker than your thumb, he delves into the questions of why Bill Gates was the richest man in the world, how professional hockey players become the best, and why Asians seem to be so talented with the world of numbers. It's well worth the read if you've got a few minutes to spare.