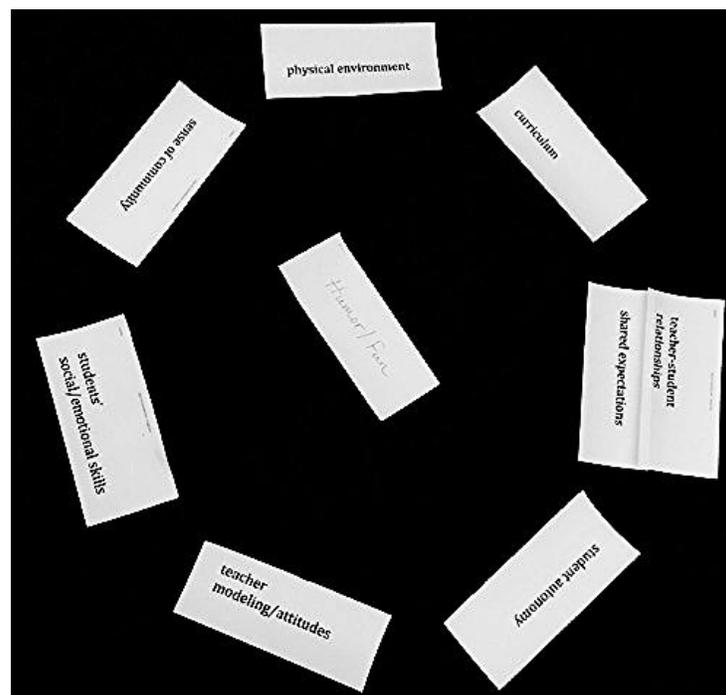


Professional Development for Staff

The first week after break at Hilltop Montessori School is often a time of excitement and engagement, and this week was a lovely example of that. The staff and students were eager to get back to it! At 8:35 on Tuesday morning, all the classes were buzzing with activity and everyone was early to school! The staff started on Monday with an In-Service Day, preparing the classrooms and working on lessons. We also held an All Staff Meeting which included an activity offered by Dan Filler, Director of Elementary. As some of you may know, in addition to his teaching, administration, and art contributions to Hilltop, Dan also uses his Montessori teaching expertise for the Montessori Elementary Teacher Training Collaborative, a teacher training program based in Lexington, Massachusetts. He shared one of their activities with our staff. It was a classic and valuable group engagement where the process was the goal, not necessarily the end result.

We divided into three groups, Children's House and Toddler Teachers, Lower EI and Upper EI teachers, and Middle School teachers. We then discussed how the Montessori components (see below) related to one another while attempting to prioritize them in order of importance. **Here are the components we discussed, in no particular order:**

- Sense of Community
- Students' Social Emotional Skills
- Physical Environment
- Curriculum
- Teacher-Student Relationship
- Student Autonomy
- Teacher Modeling/Attitudes



One group engaged in a lengthy discussion about which component they believed needed to be developed first, versus which was more important by mid-year. Another group focused on what starting component would be best to address when things seem amiss and the students need help in becoming more engaged. We also had a "wild card" and it was interesting to see that the younger programs added "Humor/Fun" while the Middle School used it to note the importance of "Real Work". The process of seeing what each group emphasized and noted was worthy and enlightening. In the end, all components were deemed critical and very much interconnected. Please know that those teaching your children at Hilltop Montessori School give a great deal of thought, care, and intention into every interaction with every child and group!

January 8, 2016