



I don't remember a time before I was a Montessori student. I started preschool at what was then the Pacific Montessori Society School, in the old Oaklands annex, just before my third birthday, and some of my first memories are of the downstairs preschool classroom. Dianne Wilton and Dominga Passmore were my first teachers. I officially graduated from Montessori shortly before construction started on the Selkirk building, but I have continued to benefit from the curiosity and ability to independently explore ideas and tackle problems that a start in Montessori provides.

As I outgrew each stage of school, I remember feeling ready for and excited by the transition to the subsequent stage (although my parents may lament my move on to grade one, at which point I stopped asking to

polish the silverware as practice for school the next day). Leaving Montessori, I moved across town to the Flexible Studies program at Reynolds Secondary, which matched perfectly with what I was used to: teachers who facilitated self-directed learning in an environment that supported the development of time-management and creative thinking skills. Flex provided the perfect stepping stone to the University of Victoria, where it was satisfying (if not particularly surprising) to see that the "formal" approach to learning I had first encountered at Montessori was exactly that which lead to success in post-secondary studies.

After university, my wife, Erin, and I moved to South Africa for a few months to study meerkats (of Meerkat Manor and unnamed-telephone-company advertisements infamy – see photo), in preparation for me starting a Mathematical Biology PhD at the University of Cambridge. We're now preparing to head back to Canada where I will continue with my PhD and where Erin can train as a "real" doctor (as opposed to the pesky scientist variety). Meanwhile, here I sit, on a brief break from academic research, getting ready to reapply the self-directed curiosity that all my amazing Montessori teachers helped to encourage and nourish not so long ago.