



Some Comparisons of Montessori Education with Traditional Education

Montessori children are usually adaptable. They have learned to work independently as well as in groups. Since they have been encouraged to make decisions from an early age, these children are problem-solvers, who make appropriate choices and manage their time well.

They have been encouraged to exchange ideas and discuss their work freely with others. Their good communication skills ease the way in new settings.

Research has shown that the best predictor of future success is a positive sense of self-esteem. Montessori programs, based on self-directed, non-competitive activities, help children develop strong self-images and the confidence to face challenges and change with optimism.

MONTESSORI	TRADITIONAL
Emphasis on cognitive structures and social development.	Emphasis on rote knowledge and social development.
After careful preparation of the classroom, the teacher has an unobtrusive role in classroom activity; child is an active participant in learning.	Teacher has dominant, active role in classroom activity; child is a passive participant in learning.
Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline.	Teacher acts as primary enforcer of external discipline.
Instruction, both individual and small group, adapt to each student's pace and learning style.	Instruction of both individual and group conforms to the adult's teaching style.
Mixed age grouping	Same age grouping
Children are encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other.	Teacher does most teaching and collaboration is discouraged.
From a carefully prepared environment, child chooses own work from interests and abilities.	Curriculum structured for child with little regard for child's interests.
Child formulates own concepts from self-teaching materials.	Teacher guides child to concepts.
Child works as long as he/she wishes on chosen projects, enabling her to develop longer spans of attention, the joy of discovery, and sense of accomplishment.	Child is generally given specific time limit for work.
Child sets own learning pace to internalize information.	Instruction pace usually set by group norm or teacher.
Child spots own errors through feedback from the material.	If work is corrected, errors usually pointed out by teacher.
Learning is reinforced internally through the child's own repetition of an activity and internal feeling of success.	Learning is reinforced externally by rote repetition and rewards/discouragements.
Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration.	Fewer materials for sensory development and concrete manipulation.
Organized program for learning care of self and environment (polishing shoes, cleaning the sink, etc.)	Less emphasis on self-care instruction and classroom maintenance.
Child can work where she/he is comfortable, moves around and talks at will (yet disturbs not the work of others); group work is voluntary and negotiable.	Child usually assigned own chair: encouraged to sit still and listen during group discussion.
Organized program for parents to understand the Montessori philosophy and participate in the learning process.	Voluntary parent involvement, often only with fundraisers; not participants in understanding the learning process.