



Some Comparisons of Montessori Education with Traditional Education

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

They have been encouraged to exchange ideas and discuss their work freely with others. Their good communications 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

Emphasis on: cognitive structures and social development

Teacher has unobtrusive role in classroom activity; child is an active participant in learning

Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline

Instruction, both individual and group, adapts to each student's learning style

Mixed age grouping

Children are encouraged to teach, collaborated, and help each other

Child chooses own work from interests and abilities

Child formulates own concepts from self-teaching materials

Child works as long as s/he wishes on chosen project

Child sets own learning pace to internalize information

Child spots own errors through feedback from the material

Learning is reinforced internally through the child's own repetition of an activity and internal feelings of success

Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration

Organized program for learning care of self and environment (polishing shoes, cleaning the sink, etc.)

Child can work where s/he is comfortable, moves around and talks at will (yet disturbs not the work of others) group work is voluntary and negotiable

Organized program for parents to understand the Montessori philosophy and participate in the learning process

Traditional

Emphasis on: rote knowledge and social development

Teacher has dominant, active role in classroom activity; child is a passive participant in learning

Teacher acts as primary enforcer of external discipline

Instruction, both individual and group, conforms to the adult's teaching style

Same age grouping

Most teaching is done by teacher and collaboration is discouraged

Curriculum structured for child with little regard for child's interests

Child is guided to concepts by teacher

Child generally given specific time limit for work

Instruction pace usually set by group norm or teacher

If work is corrected, errors usually pointed out by teacher

Learning is reinforced externally by rote repetition and rewards/discouragements

Fewer materials for sensory development and concrete manipulation

Less emphasis on self-care instruction and classroom maintenance

Child usually assigned own chair, encouraged to sit still and listen during group sessions

Voluntary parent involvement, often only as fundraisers, not participants in understanding the learning process
