
LEARNING GUIDE

**MARIA MONTESSORI:
HER LIFE AND LEGACY**

With

ANNETTE HAINES, Ed.D.



DAVIDSON *films*

Expanding the Mind's Eye since 1955

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“We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words but of experiences in which the child acts on his environment.”

-- Maria Montessori

Introduction

Training session for people preparing to be Montessori teachers.

Montessori's Background

Born in 1870 in Italy
First woman in Italy to graduate from medical school
Spoke out for women's rights at an international congress
Worked with the mentally retarded

Educational Principles / Children's House

Founded the Casa dei Bambini in Rome in 1909
Gained immediate acclaim

Three elements of education:

- Learner
Child constructs knowledge
Two streams of energy in a child
Physical energy
Mental energy

“Normalization” uniting these energies occurs when child becomes absorbed in work and concentrates

- Prepared environment
 - Aesthetically pleasing
 - Child can work independently
 - Three year age span in classes
 - Activities are carefully designed with specialized materials

“**Sensorial**” activities help the child organize and refine sensory impressions (ie: the pink tower, color tablets)

“**Practical life**” activities are designed to help the children gain self confidence in their abilities to take care of themselves. Also to understand the sequence of an activity from beginning to end (ie: hanging sweat shirt, washing cloths)

“**Mathematics**” starts with concrete representations and moves to the abstract. Children in Montessori classrooms are introduced to math earlier than in other traditions.

“**Language**” Children begin by learning the sound and shape of letters and then move on to constructing words. Reading comes later.

“**Fine Arts**” art and music

“**Grace and Courtesy**” Montessori children are helped to develop self-discipline through their experience of the classroom balance of freedom and discipline

Children learn to move around classroom and work together
Children learn to take care of the materials

- Trained adult
 - Montessori teacher seems less active than traditional teachers
 - Is responsible for caring for the environment
 - Gives lessons on the use of the equipment and concepts

“**Three period lesson**”
 Naming “This is a _____”
 Recognition “Show me the ___”
 Remembering “What is this?”

All lessons require the child to be actively engaged

Expanding the Range

The Montessori Method, 1909
 Training is through an oral tradition

Visits to the United States
Had a demonstration class at the Panama Pacific Exposition of 1915
Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget were trained in Montessori methods
Gandhi invited her to set up schools in India
While in India consolidated her ideas of human development

Each stage is different and education should reflect these differences:

Ages 0-6 Absorbent Mind

Child learns effortlessly

0-3 child absorbs impressions

3-6 child organizes impressions, learning is no longer unconscious

Ages 6-12 Time for acquisition of culture and symbolic thinking

Child is more social

Teachers are more active

Ages 12-18 Time of transformation

Young person should be doing real work

Brain scans confirm that the neural growth Montessori projected does occur

Montessori's Legacy

Montessori died in 1952

Educational principles that are accepted by many:

Critical importance of first six years of life

Classroom environment is child oriented

Multi-aged groupings and blocks of free time

Construction of knowledge

Montessori's faith in the power of intrinsic motivation

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