

Some Comparisons of Montessori Education with Traditional Education

A Montessori program is based on self-direction and cooperative activities that help a child develop a strong self-image, high levels of academic and social competence, and the confidence to face challenges with optimism. Encouraged to make decisions from an early age, Montessori educated children are problem-solvers who can make appropriate choices, manage their time, and work well with others.

Montessori Education	Traditional Education
View the child holistically, valuing cognitive, psychological, social, and spiritual development	Views the child in terms of competence, skill level, and achievement with an emphasis on core curricula standards and social development
Child is an active participant in learning; allowed to move about and respectfully explore the classroom environment; teacher is an instructional facilitator and guide	Child is a more passive participant in learning; teacher has a more dominant, central role in classroom activity
A carefully prepared learning environment and method encourages development of internal self-discipline and intrinsic motivation	Teacher acts as a primary enforcer of external discipline promoting extrinsic motivation
Instruction, both individual and group, adapts to students' learning styles and development levels	Instruction, both individual and group, adapts to core curricula benchmarks
Three-year span of age grouping, three-year cycles allow teacher, students, and parents to develop supportive, collaborative and trusting relationships	Same-age and/or skill level grouping; one-year cycles can limit development of strong teacher, student, and part collaboration
Grace, courtesy, and conflict resolution are integral part of daily Montessori peace curriculum	Conflict resolution is usually taught separately from daily classroom activity
Values concentration and depth of experience; supplies uninterrupted time for focused work cycle to develop	Values completion of assignments; time is tightly scheduled
Child's learning pace is internally determined	Instructional pace usually set by core-curricula standard expectations, group norm, or teacher
Child allowed to spot own errors through feedback from the materials; errors are viewed as part of learning process	Work is usually corrected by the teacher; errors are viewed as mistakes
Learning is reinforced internally through the child's own repetition of an activity and internal feelings of success	Learning is reinforced externally by test scores and rewards, competition and grades
Care of self and environment are emphasized as integral to the learning experience	Less emphasis on self-care, spatial awareness, and care of environment
Child can work where he/she is comfortable and the child often has choices between working alone or with a group that is highly collaborative among older students	Child is usually assigned a specific work space; talking among peers discouraged
Multi-disciplinary, interwoven curriculum	Curriculum areas usually taught as separate topics
Progress is reported through multiple formats: conferences, narrative reports, checklists and portfolio of student's work	Progress is usually reported through conferences, report cards/grades, and test scores
Children are encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other	Most teaching is done by the teacher and collaboration is an alternative teaching strategy
Child is provided opportunities to choose own work from interest and abilities, concepts taught within context of interest	Curricula organized and structured for child based on core curricula standards
Goal is to foster a love of learning	Goal is to master curricula objectives