

Maria Montessori and her approach to early childhood education

General introduction on Maria Montessori, her life, and her work in education for an understanding of the tremendous work of Maria Montessori 107 years ago, the essence of her writings, and the point of departure of her work. Coursework makes the link between Maria Montessori's predecessors who influence her thinking and the world children think and act today. Coursework also contributes to understand the Montessori principle that education is a help for life and inspires every Montessori teacher's work and attitude towards children.

Practical Life or Daily Life Activities

Coursework explores the content and the value of this avenue in the Montessori curriculum. Coursework provides opportunities to experiment with the specific materials how the child acquires the ability to care for himself, his environment and others living close to him in the community. Coursework is designed to train the child to become involved in purposeful activities which requires concentration, exactness, sequence in movements and finally independence. Coursework in Practical Life demonstrates the refinement of motor skills in the life of a child of 2 ½ to 6 years of age and addresses the underlining principles covering practical life activities in relationship with self-development.

Psychomotricity or Sensorial activities leading to Intellectual Life

Coursework offers knowledge of the importance of sensorial education in the Montessori environment as well as skills in the techniques of the three-period lesson and in the progression from concrete to abstract with the use of the three steps in Sensorial: 1) to distinguish, 2) to specify (three-period lesson), and 3) to generalize. Coursework demonstrates the sensorial foundations of the intellectual life in the child's development. The techniques used by the Montessori teacher to present the Montessori materials designed for demonstration of activities related to sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound follow the natural patterns of the child. Coursework focuses on the role of the adult: observe, compare, classify, judge, learn to make decisions and to draw conclusions. Coursework shows how the intellectual life of a child works from concrete to abstract. Coursework assists students in developing and implementing music and movement activities including rhythmic skills, percussion instruments skills, Montessori bells and singing skills

Language Arts

Language development is linked with sensory education, one supporting the other. Montessori viewed language as communication incorporating structure, meaning and emotion in the expression of thoughts and experiences. Coursework presents materials for development of verbal and graphic language that includes composing with the moveable alphabet, writing, and reading from a short phonetic word to a longer one and a more complex one containing one or many digraphs to the composition of sentences with short, long phonetic words and complex words to reading sentences that communicate thoughts. Coursework explores the mental processes of the child's mind: analysis (composing and writing) and synthesis (reading). Coursework also explores the muscular activities relevant to holding a pencil as well as the mental activities such as learning the graphic codes and composing.

Mathematics

Coursework presents math's as a set of "materialized abstractions" which are sensorial based concrete experiences that will eventually lead the child to abstraction. Coursework identifies the math's symbols and concepts by offering concrete materials first. Coursework guides students to consider that abstraction can't be taught; it must rather be taken from the experience of the individual. The young child takes in the concrete experiences through the senses and forms the structure of his logical and mathematical mind. Math's presentations are in a sequential order to lead the child to abstraction. A pattern of concrete, symbol and combination of the concrete and the symbol is evident in the materials.

Theory and Practice in the Montessori Approach to Early Childhood Education

Coursework offers an introduction to Montessori Principles of child development and educational methods, Coursework explores philosophy specific to the Montessori approach of education including core concepts such as the absorbent mind, sensitive periods, the logical and mathematical mind, and the spiritual and moral development of the child. Coursework examines the relationship between the Montessori theory, the prepared environment for the child, the adult as a model and the child as a whole entity. Through this overview of Montessori's beliefs, coursework explores the role of the teacher as an inspirer and respectful person. Coursework investigates observation skills essential to the Montessori classroom teacher as well as it documents observation techniques. The observations include not only the materials used by children, but the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of each individual child. Coursework offers an overview on theories and theorists of child development, stages of development and childhood education.

Cultural and Scientific Subjects

Cultural Subjects at the Early Childhood level includes Geography, History and Sciences that embrace Botany and Zoology in order to help the young child begin to understand his relationship to all elements and aspects of this world and appreciate his role as a citizen of the Earth. Coursework explores the diversity of the physical characteristics of the planet Earth through maps, land and water models, and customs of different people. Coursework examines different concepts of time, passage, length and cycle of time. An extended story of the Universe is offered. Coursework also explores natural laws of sciences in botany as well as in zoology, ways to describe and classify plants and animals, as well as studies to determine their cycle of life.

Material-Making and Arts & Crafts

Coursework provides techniques and resources for creating beautiful and effective materials for the Montessori classroom that includes lecture and hands-on experience with material-making. Coursework covers teaching basic skills including two-dimensional and three-dimensional work, and integration of aesthetics into many curriculum areas.

Classroom Management

Coursework offers an overview of classroom management skills to include, curriculum scheduling, lesson strategies, evaluation of children and design of report cards, techniques for discipline, communication and problem solving, teaching techniques, transitions and classroom procedures. Coursework also includes techniques for developing the parent level of awareness of Montessori education. It also includes an overview of the role of administration within the structure of the school including review of licensing requirements, starting a school, legal structures of schools, budgeting and financing.

Rhythm, movement, folk dances for children and Music with the Montessori Bells

Coursework provides techniques and resources for generating lively activities pertaining to yoga for children, "brain gym", rhythm and movement, walking on the line to consolidate body's coordination as well as folk dancing for the benefit of young children. Coursework provides techniques and resources to expose children to music with the Montessori Bells including distinguishing sounds, tones, rhythm, notation, singing and activities with percussion instruments.