

Comparing Montessori Education with Traditional Education

MONTESSORI	TRADITIONAL
Focuses on cognitive structures & social development	Focuses on rote knowledge and social development.
Teacher has 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 and control.	Teacher acts as primary enforcer of external discipline and control.
Students' group and individual instruction is based on their own learning style.	Students' group and individual instruction is based on the teaching style of the adult instructor.
Mixed age grouping	Same age grouping
Children are encouraged to teach, collaborate and help each other.	Most teaching is done by instructor and collaboration is discouraged.
Child chooses own work from interests & abilities.	Curriculum is structured based on adult standards, with little regard for child's interests.
Child formulates own concepts from self-teaching materials.	Child is guided to concepts by teacher.
Child works as long as s/he wishes on chosen project.	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 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 feelings of success.	Learning is reinforced externally by rote repetition and rewards/discouragement.
Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration	Fewer materials for sensory development and concrete manipulation.
Organized practical life program for learning care of self and environment (polishing shoes, cleaning the sink)	Less emphasis on self-care instruction and classroom maintenance
Child can work where s/he is comfortable, moves around and talks at will (without disturbing other's work); group work is voluntary and negotiable.	Child is usually assigned own chair, encouraged to sit still and listen during group sessions.