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MONTESSORI: ON TEACHING
READING AND THE LOVE OF
READING SIMULTANEOUSLY

by

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- SLIDE 1. Montessori, as an educational program was designed and developed by a Medical Doctor - Dr. Maria Montessori - to be used with mentally retarded children already assigned to custodial care in Italy's mental institutions. It worked so well, that her children scored higher on the National Education tests than did normal children of the same grade level. Later, Dr. Montessori took her program into the streets, setting up a day-care center in the ghetto to help serve children left parentless and unsupervised during working hours. The goal of Montessori and Traditional Educational Programs is the same, to provide learning experiences for the child. The biggest differences lie in the kind of learning experiences each school provides and the methods used to establish this goal.
- SLIDE 2. The children range in age from approximately 2½ to age 7, there are only two classroom rules. First, the children must respect and care for the materials and the environment. Secondly, the children must respect the other children's right to use the materials. When a child breaks a rule, the director sits down with them on the spot and they discuss the problem. Using the question-answer technique, the child is lead to his own conclusion of why he did it, how he felt at the time it happened, how others felt, and what could be done to correct the problem. It is real, it is practical and the children learn to incorporate this into their daily lives. And if you look at the two rules, they cover everything in our own adult lives, from being respectful and courteous, to protection of our environment, and respect for the individual-which counteracts discrimination. DISCIPLINE HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD, IN ORDER TO WORK. Montessori teaches respect of the individual.
- SLIDE 3. This child is unrolling an area designator rug. It marks his territory and is not to be violated by others unless HE invites them.
- SLIDE 4. The children carefully gather their material and return to their rug.
- SLIDE 5. Some work together and some choose to work alone. The building block theory used in Montessori is very involved, covering all functioning life areas. It begins as an indirect method to establish readiness through the training of the senses, primarily sight and hearing. Dr. Montessori's prime consideration for both her retarded children and her street children was to help them care for themselves.
- SLIDE 6. A Montessori classroom is divided into areas. Here you see the Practical Life Area.

- SLIDE 7. This is hand/eye coordination as it relates to the child's needs. One of the things the children learn is to fix HEALTHFUL snacks.
- SLIDE 8. Manipulation. He has already had his snack.
- SLIDE 9. Weaving. Look at the concentration. This is, for her, real work. Montessori shows much respect for the child's struggle to learn. The word "play" is never used in relationship to their efforts, always the word "WORK". Thus, the Montessori child develops a very positive attitude toward the word work which carries on into adult life. Work is good, work is self-rewarding.
- SLIDE 10. This young lady is cutting celery. Note the use of real knives. Nothing in Montessori is pretend. The children are taught to take care of themselves and a five year old can get a simple meal.
- SLIDE 11. The next pictures show basic hand/eye coordination activities. But look, too, at the faces of the children.
- SLIDE 12. Cutting with real scissors.
- SLIDE 13. Hammer and nails.
- SLIDE 14. Rhythm activities help develop large muscles. Montessori does a great deal of work in this area. We had specially designed playground equipment and held yoga classes twice a week. The lady in barefeet is Dr. Lawson from Albion College, who designed a special program for our school, using rhythm based activities to develop gross motor control and coordination.
- SLIDE 15. The balance beam is just one example of the indoor gymnastic equipment available to the children. Again, work in gross motor development.
- SLIDE 16. Painting. One child with dylexia, spent 6 months doing nothing else before she moved onto other materials in the classroom. She was satisfying a sensitive period to develop readiness for learning that was to come. This could not be done in a traditional classroom environment.
- SLIDE 17. A real screwdriver and screws.

- SLIDE 18. Pouring liquid, an advanced technique.
- SLIDE 19. From pouring SAND.
- SLIDE 20. Using a dropper to move water from one container to another.
- SLIDE 21. Nails and string become pictures, or geometric shapes.
- SLIDE 22. All schools have puzzles, but here we can see Montessori material designed to grow with the child. The purposes for this? Familiar materials DO NOT distract from the learning process. At three years of age, the purpose is to take it apart and put it back together. Later, the child will learn all the parts of the lobster, labelled for reading and science.
- SLIDE 23. So, too, with the maps. The children's first puzzles are the beginnings of visual discrimination, so important in the reading process. While at the same time, he is learning important geographical concepts to use later.
- SLIDE 24. Where does this belong? Hand/eye coordination, visual discrimination, multiplication. Right now he is demonstrating organization and grouping.
- SLIDE 25. Solid geometry.
- SLIDE 26. Visual discrimination, look, touch and feel, investigate.
- SLIDE 27. Graded cylinders. Visual discrimination. Hand/eye coordination.
- SLIDE 28. All Montessori materials are self-correcting. Look at that struggle.
- SLIDE 29. More blocks. But notice, everything is in a base 10.
- SLIDE 30. Montessori uses the word "WORK" always. It's not play. Look at her. These children develop not only a love of learning but much respect for the word work.
- SLIDE 31. More blocks. These employ fine muscle control and development - the beginnings of writing.
- SLIDE 32. Visual discrimination and coordination, also base ten for counting later on.

- SLIDE 33. Will it or won't it?
- SLIDE 34. I did it! A sense of pride and accomplishment.
- SLIDE 35. This child had other ideas. I snapped the picture as he ran to get the Director. I didn't think it would last.
- SLIDE 36. In Montessori, children have a wealth of material to work with as their skills grow and increase rapidly. Mental concepts can be formed much sooner than the ability to communicate that concept on paper appears. But each new concept is a building block for the next. A template used for drawing....
- SLIDE 37. ...later becomes geometry.
- SLIDE 38. More templates, first for drawing, then fractions.
- SLIDE 39. Same template, but now it is being used for matching.
- SLIDE 40. Triangle templates in a more advanced stage of matching and organization.
- SLIDE 41. She is designing her own work sheet.
- SLIDE 42. These templates are all based again, in base ten.
- SLIDE 43. Solid geometry, visual discrimination, hand/eye coordination. This is getting pretty advanced.
- SLIDE 44. Sorry, this is beyond my Math ability, but it does have something to do with cubes.
- SLIDE 45. Straight visual discrimination. These color plates have additional plates that range from 1 to 20 and from light to dark.
- SLIDE 46. These children develop such a keen sense of color that they can eventually cross match colors by value number, like red 2 to a blue 2. FANTASTIC!!!
- SLIDE 47. Auditory discrimination. These are sound cylinders to match.

- SLIDE 48. and they have a very fine sound difference.
- SLIDE 49. The prize in auditory discrimination. A set of three octave xylophones, the Orff instruments.
- SLIDE 50. Children learn to hear half and whole steps. They can build octaves and cross match octave tones to make up their own sounds.
- SLIDE 51. For the older or more advanced child, the bells. A musical device of pure tone, allowing them to learn to write their own music. Also recommended, and used in many Montessori schools is the Suzuki Music Program. (Which is locally available here)
- SLIDE 52. Even the sense of touch is not ignored.
- SLIDE 53. More tactile training is explored with these weight tablets. The difference in weight is very, very small and the children can learn to match them. (The adults had trouble).
- SLIDE 54. The most advanced tactile training involved the sense of heat and temperature given off by different materials.
- SLIDE 55. These cylinders contain many different smells. Another one of our senses not ignored by Montessori.
- SLIDE 56. This is the language area where a child moves into a direct learning experience. The child demonstrates readiness through 1.) Curiosity, and 2.) a desire to use the materials. Children will investigate this area many times before they actually settle in to "work" - When THEY feel ready.
- SLIDE 57. Visual discrimination, organization and matching.
- SLIDE 58. Something familiar? Yes the idea of sandpaper letters, now familiar items in most kindergarten and 1st grade rooms came to use directly from Montessori, as so many of our teaching materials have. BUT NOTE THE DIFFERENCE. Beginning cursive. There is one publisher of school textbooks that has come out with a system of teaching cursive writing that eliminates the transition period between block and cursive. It is the Dilanian Method designed specifically for the left-handed child. Montessori uses it with all children.
- SLIDE 59. The secret of reading is the grouping of letters taught together. Here you can see the groups, all color keyed. When a child is working with letters, he is working only in one of these groups. Isolated from the rest at the beginning, later combining groups as the skill advances.

- SLIDE 60. Names of letters and their sounds are taught simultaneously.
- SLIDE 61. Children love to play with sounds. They are an end in themselves. This little boy is grouping letter sounds and listening to the effect. Many are really funny. Everything they learn is an end in itself. Until suddenly something clicks for the individual child and he alone discovers he has the ability to read. At this point he has already mastered approximately 200 reading words. This fact alone guarantees total success at his first reading experience. It is the same for every child in Montessori - the only difference is when it happens. But it will happen sometime between the age of 4 and 7.
- SLIDE 62. This explosion into learning as Montessori calls it, is the most fantastic thing I have ever seen. Only someone who has experienced this can know the full emotional impact it carries. My daughter was brain damaged at birth, resulting in dyslexia. She tested as a potential non-reader with an IQ of 152 plus. She experienced a very late "Bloom" at 6 years 3 months. It was precisely 12:16 p.m. on Sunday February 12th. We arrived home from church and were getting things ready for dinner when suddenly I heard this scream in my living room, "Ma, I can read." We dropped everything and rushed in. You could just see a glow spread over the child as she read on and on and on right to the end of the book. Laughing and crying and jumping up and down, she spent the next couple of hours going from one thing to another, reading everything in sight. She will never forget the moment she learned to read. And neither will I. This is Montessori's "JOY OF LEARNING".
- SLIDE 63. After the explosion, or bloom has occurred, Montessori quickly builds on this experience. Here is the origin of Dolman Delicato Method of teaching reading - so popular in the 60's. A barn labeled with the nouns...parts of speech and sentence building is started.
- SLIDE 64. Material used to develop sentence structure.
- SLIDE 65. Finally the naming of the parts of speech.
- SLIDE 66. This is Montessori, a place for every child. Public Law 94-142 - fifty years ago. EPI's were used by Dr. Montessori to check daily progress of each child, and are still used today.
- SLIDE 67. Why Montessori? Time. Time and patience. Time to discover and explore, making full use of the child's own natural sensitive periods for learning.

SLIDE 68.

And they LEARN! Not from competition against others, but from competition within themselves.

SLIDE 69.

They become strong individuals with a real sense of identity, self-respect and pride in their own achievements. Their own as well as other. They respect themselves and care for themselves, thus they are free to respect and care for others.