

## 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:" The process of uniting these energies. It occurs when a 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: Designed to help the children gain self-confidence in their ability to take care of themselves. They are also designed to understand the sequence of an activity from beginning to end (ie: hanging sweat shirt, washing clothes)
    - "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

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- **Trained adult**
  - Montessori teacher appears to be less active than traditional teachers are
  - 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 of Montessori Education

- *The Montessori Method*, 1909
  - Training is through an oral tradition.
  - Dr. Montessori’s 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, she 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 outside traditional classrooms
- Brain scans confirm that the neural growth Montessori projected does occur

## Montessori’s Legacy

- Dr. Montessori died in 1952
- Educational principles that are accepted by many:
  - Critical importance of first six years of life
  - Child-oriented classroom environment
  - Multi-aged groupings and blocks of free time
  - Construction of knowledge
  - Montessori’s faith in the power of intrinsic motivation

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