

The montessori school essay sample

[Environment](#)



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In 1945, Loris Malaguzzi founded the first Reggio school. His Reggio education dominated the Italian education that was already in place. The approach of Reggio is community led, this involves everyone in their close community but also those from outside of the close community. Within Reggio, they repeat their ideas and activities, so that the children are able to revisit what they were doing the day before to further their understanding of what they were doing, but also get help if they need it. Reggio also allows the children to direct their own learning, so if they do not fully understand what they are doing at the time, then they can go back and revisit it to make sure they understand it, however if the children are confident with it, then they will move onto learning something new to expand their knowledge. In Reggio schools the children are encouraged to learn throughout their senses, at all ages. Forest School

Forest schools enable children to learn whilst in the outside environment. Whilst being at a forest school; it teaches children to be independent, self-reliant and to be able to evaluate the risks they would take. When attending a Forest School, they also follow the guidelines of Maslow's pyramid of Hierarchical Needs, they make sure that the basic care needs are met before they continue with higher learning; " Warmth: They provide the correct clothing

Food: Provide healthy snacks and meals

Drinks: Children given water or hot drinks

Safe: Children feel safe both physically and emotionally." (<http://www.forestschools.com/what-happens-at-a-forest-school/> 25/11/2014). At a forest school, children learn holistically from their outdoor environment, such as; <https://assignbuster.com/the-montessori-school-essay-sample/>

trees and the woodland. Areas within the National Curriculum are covered within a Forest School, however the areas of the National Curriculum are not directly taught.

Montessori School

The Montessori approach encourages children to learn with a hands on = experience, with a wide variety of materials. Montessori approach allows the children to choose activities their self “ the environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct their own experience” (Maria Montessori, Class Hand-Out). They allow children to explore their own capable skills; and the teachers are trained to observe the children throughout play and that they should only get involved if the child says that they cannot succeed. The approach came about when children were learning and developing by rote, with Maria Montessori working with young children of families. E2:

I have chosen the Montessori approach from Italy, as I have chosen this approach as I find it most child centers and cooperates nicely with the children’s basic care and learning needs. One reason why I support this approach is that the children’s learning is based around what the children’s interests are and the teachers in this approach plan and provide the materials and opportunities to reach the full potential, for example; in the Montessori setting there are ‘ pink bricks’, which is where the child has to complete the pink bricks by laying them on top of each other, and throughout the children’s years this activity will get progressively harder, which will help to develop the children’s mathematical skills and keep the children’s minds motivated. Another reason why I like this approach is <https://assignbuster.com/the-montessori-school-essay-sample/>

because of how easy the Montessori ideas can be adapted into all settings e. g. at home, nurseries.

The reason why this can be done, is because the materials are simple and easy to use, all the materials used are natural, “ Montessori teachers avoid plastic, choosing natural materials instead” (<http://www.montessori.edu/prod.html> 4/01/2015). When visiting a Montessori setting; it was evident that they mostly used resources made of wood, cotton and home ware e. g. pots and pans. By having materials of this choice means that they are more durable and last a lot longer than plastic toys; this also means that the environment will be safer for the children. In Montessori settings they also use materials found in the house or garden, which makes it affordable for low budget nurseries or if parents are recreating experiences in their own homes.

Children’s journeys throughout education should be personal, and this is what the Montessori approach achieves. From visiting a Montessori setting, the practitioners accomplished this as they allowed the children to play individually “ Montessori thought working alone encouraged children to become independent learners” (M. Beaver, J. Brewster et al, CACHE Level 3 Childcare and Education). It is also important that they do plan times for the children to socialize and work together as this will build their Social and Emotional development. By providing individual learning journey books for each child, means that the child’s key worker can add notes and pictures to show to their family what they do at nursery, however these are also available to take home and adapt them at home.

E3:

Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870. She wanted to become a doctor, so she enrolled at the University of Rome; however at this time she began to develop an interest in children who were deprived; which at the time were referred to as ‘ idiot children’, this encouraged Maria into studying about those who were mentally defective. Her interest then changed, and was focused into education. When she was fixed on to this idea, she began to study the theories which were devised over the last 200 years. By 1900 Montessori was known for a variety of things, such as; teaching in a school of education and being the directorship of a school in Rome; also teaching and training in the care and education of mentally deficient children. Maria then believed that her approach would offer children better opportunities for the children’s growth and development. Her approach was first put into practice in casa del bambini – meaning children’s house.

In her theory she introduced child sized furniture, as well as making sure that all activities and resources were accessible by all the children. “ She believed the learning environment was just as important as the learning itself” (Dawn Murray, Class Hand-Out). This is so that the children were able to have free flow play without getting interrupted; but so that they could also develop their independence by choosing what they would like to do, and also learn at their individual pace. Montessori approach began from the result of carrying out observations on children. The Maria Montessori approach is believed to “ lead to children who are developed in a balanced way, who are decision makers and who are confident and independent” (L. Pound, 2005, How children learn, Step forward publishing). Maria believed that the way children

with disabilities were being taught, should be the way for all children to be taught.

Maria then went and set up a children's house in Rome, and worked with those children who were not privileged. She observed the children, and found that the children were interested in the materials which she provided and respected the setting, they also built relationships with other children, along with finding out their own likes and interests. " The children displayed self-discipline, preferred learning materials to toys, and worked with a profound concentration and joy. They had a love for order, respected their environment, and enjoyed working in silence beside their friends"

(http://www.a-childs-place.com/Montessori_method.html – 6/01/2015), after doing this Maria began to direct systems in centers in Rome's worst neighborhoods for those children of working class. E4:

Montessori have an ethos that upholds key principles to ensure the approaches values are kept. These are; Recognising the sensitive periods

The prepared environment

Structured freedom leading to self-discipline

The special learning materials

The special approach to fantasy and imagination

The principles are unique and individual to the Montessori Pedagogy. The teachers within the Montessori Education uphold these to the best of their ability.

Recognising the sensitive periods

By recognizing the children's sensitive periods, these periods could be when

a child is absorbed within a certain activity, such as; putting objects in order, dressing up, running or writing. It is important that the teachers encourage the children to embrace within these periods, as “ it is easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive period than at any other time in her life” (Aline D. Wolf: A parent’s guide to a Montessori Classroom). The prepared environment

“ Montessori saw the prepared environment as an essential ingredient for the successful development of the children”. This approach sees the environment as the key method to the children’s success. Montessori teachers uphold this as they plan the environment before the children begin to learn and explore from it. They ensure that all areas of provision are suitable for all the children’s learning and personal needs. “ The prepared environment is especially curative in that it encourages the children to act spontaneously and freely, to select the task and build self-esteem” (M. Montessori and G. L Gutek: The Montessori Method). Structured freedom leading to self-discipline

The Montessori ethos allows children the freedom to learn and explore, and the approach follows this well. Montessori believe that “ a Montessori classroom provides freedom while maintaining an environment that encourages a sense of order and self-discipline” (J. H. Mason and S. J. Wilder: Fundamental constructs in mathematics education). The special learning materials

“ All sorts of specially designed learning tools, but also paint and brushes, scissors and paper, water and even snacks” (REACH: An introduction to the

Montessori movement across the UK). It is seen that that from within a Montessori setting that their resources and activities are mostly made from wood and other natural sources. By having a range of textures the children learn that different objects feel different and this is not an experience that the children would get from just playing with plastic. The special approach to fantasy and imagination

“ Reality is studied in detail, and then the whole is imagined. The detail is able to grow in the imagination, and so total knowledge is attained” (Maria Montessori From Childhood to Adolescence, Page 18). The Montessori approach gives the children the opportunities to do this, as they are able to complete real life tasks, such as; dusting, washing up and fastening buttons/zips. Montessori education do this so that the children can enter a world of imaginary play, and role modelling, which builds on the children’s confidence and self-esteem. “ In Montessori schools creativity and imagination are rooted in reality rather than fantasy” (Early Years Educator: January 2006). E5/E6/D2:

The Montessori approach uses their own unique and personal resources, which help to promote the children’s learning in a constructive way. One Montessori resource is the cylinder blocks. These help the children to discriminate between the sizes of them, but also their hand-eye co-ordination, this then helps to promote the children’s hand writing. The cylinder blocks are made of wood, and there are 10; which vary in size and depth. The children would take the cylinders out of the block, and then try to recognize and discriminate the sizes to which holes they would go into. These cylinder blocks are just one resource which have an aspect of trial and

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error, which gives the children the opportunity to correct their mistakes, teaching them the method of self-correction. This then benefits the children in the approach as this resource enables them a hands on way of learning, by them taking part in concrete learning. Some settings may not provide resources like this; so this gives the Montessori children advantage and experience.

The Montessori approach love to use sandpaper, and one resource which is popular and made from sandpaper is the Montessori rough and smooth boards. The boards can be made from wooden blocks with bits of sandpaper glued onto them or the sandpaper can be made into shapes of letters then glues on. Both methods promote the children's learning, as they encourage a new language for the children. The children will also learn about different textures and how to describe the textures accurately e. g. " smooth" or " rough". The sandpaper letters can also be used to prepare the children for when they begin writing; by tracing the letters they will gradually start to familiarize them with the curves and corners of the letters and will then start to understand the letters. By using sandpaper and other materials, it benefits the children as they can explore a range of materials, however mainstream nurseries may not do this because of health and safety reasons.

Montessori practitioners remember to give the children the time that they need to explore the materials in a hands on way, however they are also there to make sure there is a safe and secure environment by making sure there is no materials that can harm the children in any way. Practical life is an important theme which runs throughout the Montessori approach; from this a range of resources and materials are provided for the children to

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encourage them to take part in practical life activities. An activity which links with practical life is fastening buttons; the Montessori education approach this by providing the children with fastening frames for the children to practice on. There will be a variety of boards with fasteners on, from zips to buckles to buttons. This helps to develop children's fine motor skills, and the children's concentration levels. The children will also begin to feel independent from learning valuable life skills " the buttoning frames are a source of great delight enabling the child to conquer independence in caring for his own person" (Maria Montessori: The discovery of the child).

As the children within a Montessori setting are provided with resources like this; it becomes evident that they will understand the basics of practical life quicker than children who are in a mainstream nursery. This also provides the children in Montessori settings the advantages and skills to help them in later life. Dry/wet transfer activities are also personalized into the Montessori routine. These activities are available throughout the day for the children to try, it also enables the children to build their skills from these activities. Wet transfer activities can be transferring a liquid from one container, to another container, making the container smaller as the child conquers the skills of pouring and making the activity more challenging. Dry transfer activities such as threading beads or transferring beads with chopsticks from one container to another, also promotes the children's fine motor skills and promotes the children to concentrate. These activities also help the children with the basics of writing; using their hands and fingers in ways they have not before.

Older children can show to the younger children how to carry out the pouring procedures and model to them how to do it correctly. This is a unique way how Montessori teach children and it gives them an advantage to watch role models that are near their age, which will then result in the children understanding and empathise with the children more than they would adults. Montessori see that self-correction is a key skill that every child should have. The Pink Tower resource, allows the children to do this by encouraging them to self-correct the mistakes they might have made. The pink tower allows children to discriminate which cubes goes on top of one another; if a child puts a large cube on top of a small cube, the child will be aware of this mistake and correct it themselves, this encourages the children to problem solve and gives them independence; as well as learning that, the children will learn to co-ordinate their movements thoroughly and prepare the children for maths; ordering and sequence.

This activity also helps the children to be able to self-correct their mistakes, instead of a practitioner doing it for them, this benefits the children at Montessori as they become more independent and have a lot more perseverance towards succeeding in things. In mainstream nurseries practitioners would rush to help children straight away and would not allow them time to see if they could figure it out on their own. “ Child-friendly size of furniture, which was revolutionary in Montessori day, has become accepted practice of all good early years’ provisions” (B. Isaacs, Bringing the Montessori approach to your Early Years Practice). Montessori settings provide child sized resources such as: dustpans, mops and brushes so that the children can help look after the environment that they are in.

By having these resources available for the children to use; it will help them have respect for their environment and also make them more aware of the environment around them; they will also see the purpose of using the resources as they will see that they take away the dirt from other resources and activities which have taken place. Once they have cleaned an object they will feel a sense of responsibility and proud; it will also make them feel accomplished and will boost their confidence for succeeding in doing what they have done. The children will benefit from this as they will learn and explore in safe and motivating environments which are designed to suit them, rather than suit the practitioners. The children will also feel comfortable and relaxed knowing that they are able to use the resources and equipment that is specifically designed for them, which will give the children a sense of belonging.

E7/B1:

One principle that Montessori teachers uphold is their observational techniques. It is important for teachers to observe children in this approach as there is no formal exams to track the children's progress; Montessori use other methods to track the children's progress. Montessori “discourage traditional competitive measurements of achievement, such as grades and tests, and instead focuses on the individual progress and development of each child” (<http://intermolecularly/news/article-407528/Children-Montessori-Schools-Better-Educated.html> – 6/01/2015). By doing this Montessori practitioners, can see the materials that the children are using can help them learn and succeed, but also when they should introduce new materials and resources, also through the observations teachers can revisit them to

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guide them for next steps for the children. “ As Montessori educators (either at home or in a school setting) we must keep on top of our observation skills and use them regularly” (http://www.montessoriprintshop.com/Observation_in_Montessori_.html – 6/01/2015).

This helps the children to progress in their development, by having supportive introductory material from the practitioners. This then promotes scaffolding until the children are comfortable to proceed and achieve “ we scaffold the children’s learning by progressing in small steps” (B. Isaacs, *The Montessori Method: Number Names*). Montessori teacher’s goals are to intervene with the children’s learning less. Within the Montessori approach, they see the children’s learning unique and personal to them and only the children can mold the way they learn, and intervention should be put in place when it is seen as appropriate to the child. “ Intervene as little as possible. Observe the situation before you decide when, whether and how to intervene” (<http://www.montessoritraining.net/> – 6/01/2015). Throughout this practitioners support the children by helping them to develop their self-help skills, and it is the practitioner’s role to help the children discover these skills. “ To ensure that the environment provides for the developmental needs of each individual child” (B. Isaacs, *Bringing the Montessori approach to your early years practice*).

This is a key part that practitioners should carry out when the environment is in use. Practitioners should carry out risk assessments on all the toys, making sure that all provisions are accessible and all children are able to use the resources effectively. It is important that Montessori teachers are prepared and organized for the children’s learning, from this the children will

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also feel prepared and organised in a similar way. One way that teachers do this is by having prepared environments, “ the environment must be a living one, directed by higher intelligence, arranged by an adult who is prepared for his mission” (Maria Montessori, Class Hand-out). This enables children to become organised themselves, and have a prepared environments, this helps the children to choose materials at freewill, without having confusing and interruptions. It is good practice of the Montessori practitioners to do this “ a key aspect of this ‘ prepared environment’ is the selection of intriguing and developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning” (Early Years Educator, January 2006).

It can seem time consuming to Montessori practitioners, but it is vital to look at the outcomes for the children’s learning, and looking at how the organisation and preparation can help the children learn. Children will know what they want to do throughout the day and what milestones they want to achieve, and they will achieve this in a prepared environment. Montessori practitioners plan their environments around the curriculums, and all the key principles of the curriculum should be included, e. g. Montessori teacher should prepare the environment for children to carry out preliminary exercises, materials for exercises such as pouring a jug and using a screwdriver, care of the environment such as; dusting, ironing and sewing, sand paper letters and numbers, world globes and square cubes.

Having all the resources in one room can help the children to pick their own chosen activities to help them absorb the subject. Through this the children will think and discover materials for themselves rather than the materials being displayed. Teachers help to promote this by allowing the children to

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explore the environment without any interruptions until they chose an activity/subject. The practitioners can then promote this by observing and ‘ following’ the child until they are ready to be introduced to new materials and resources which could be of the next stage of learning for the children.

D1:

Many of the Montessori ideas have led to positive outcomes and have been mapped into our current practice within the Early Years Settings. There is a whole range of ideas that can be taken from the Montessori approach and adapted into our current practice; one of the ideas being; ‘ recognising sensitive periods’. The way that Montessori practitioners handled the children’s sensitive periods, practitioners today in current practice can handle them in a similar way, “ as the child grow, they will be able to orientate themselves within the home through familiar arrangements and the child will adapt to them” (B. Isaacs, Bringing the Montessori approach to your early years practice). This is seen as an important transition and also a sensitive period during a child’s life as things are changing. By looking at the Montessori approach I can see that this period does need addressing to make sure that the children are being made to feel secure and safe. Another idea within the approach which has helped me gather knowledge of the environment in current settings is ‘ having prepared environment’.

By taking ideas from the Montessori approach, I am able to see that it is important for the environment both inside and outside to be prepared to high standards for the children, as this will allow them children to gain knowledge and understand the materials and resources which are provided for them. It is important to do this as the children will feel safe and secure having a

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prepared environment ready for them to explore. When a child is concentrating I have learnt that by intervening less than it can give positive outcomes as a child's progress and concentration skills develop. By putting this into practice means that I am able to observe the children by being non-participant in their learning, which will give me a better outcome when looking at their development, it will make it more accurate and clear. Also by intervening less means that it will build the children's self-reliance skills, as they may be behind in this skill in the setting if they are always getting support and guidance, and not being independent and being left to try do the activities/work on their own.

By giving children time to problem solve and concentrate on activities/work they are doing, means that when they have achieved the task it will boost their confidence, rather than just being told what to do and how to do things. By gaining knowledge from children participating in activities that involve comprehensive practical skills, which has then influenced my practice. From researching the Montessori approach I can see that they allow the children to take part in life skills, such as; cooking, cleaning, dressing and caring for themselves, which then supports the children in becoming independent and mature, as they will feel proud of looking after themselves. When the children have finished a task, such as; mopping or dusting, they will feel a sense of accomplishment as they will see a result, such as; the dirt being gone or the objects becoming clean. Through the research it has encouraged me to support these tasks, by providing child sized resources such as; mops and brushes, this helps to provide opportunities to the children to gain

life skills and experiences, which will benefit the children later in life and help them develop to the next stages. C1:

Comparing Montessori and Waldorf Steiner approaches.

Similarities

Differences

Montessori and Steiner, both have an interest in having a natural environment which means that their materials and resources are natural too.

“ Montessori teachers avoid plastic, choosing instead natural materials.

There is also no “ kits” or “ sets”” (<http://montessori.edu/prod/html> –

2/12/2014). This quote also links to Steiner’s approach of “ appeal to senses by being made from natural materials in soft colours” (J. Nicol and S. Green,

Bringing the Steiner Waldorf approach to your early years practice). Both

Montessori and Steiner believe that natural resources are best, as they tend

to last longer and they also challenge the children’s senses more than plastic

and other material toys. Steiner believe that it is better for children

emotionally and developmentally to not start learning until a later stage than

Montessori, “ formal learning does not begin until age 7 and yet research

shows the children obtain comparable, and often superior results to their

peers from state schools” (www.therapyandspirituality.com 12/12/14).

Comparing this to a Montessori school; there is a noticeable variation

between the two methodologies. “ The absorbent mind – conception to six...

the fundamental principle of this stage is the recognition of the child as a

spontaneous learner” (B. Isaacs and S. Green: Bringing the Montessori

approach to your early years practice). This then contradicts Steiner’s

theory. Montessori and Steiner’s curriculum and practice is closely linked to

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the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Montessori education does this by having a “settling in process and how the child feels about coming to nursery, activities are organized in the prepared environment and available to the children and the pedagogy is embedded in the developmental needs of the child” (B. Isaacs and S. Green; Bringing the Montessori approach to your early years practice). Steiner also links closely to the statements, as they also imbed the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

“Children engage in many activities, such as; sewing and weaving, which develops hand-eye co-ordination” and there is also “constant opportunities, from domestic tasks and creative experiences, to build up their gross and fine motor skills” (J. Nicol and S. Green; Bringing the Steiner Waldorf approach to your Early Years Practice), both these approaches take in a variety of others approaches and adapt them to fit in with their own approaches.

The Steiner approach is more teacher directed, then Montessori education. Within the Steiner approach; stories and fantasy are a central theme, they look at stories and fantasy by including lots of art, music and activities to their learning. Practitioners are seen by others to be the ones to initiate play and learning, rather than to guide the children and to demonstrate to them learning activities which they could do independently. In Montessori schools; reading, writing and maths are introduced very early on in the children’s education, however they are not part of the curriculum till later on within Steiner education. Montessori believe that the practitioners are a part of the whole education and learning within the early years, however Steiner put off educational learning till later.

Montessori and Steiner both believe that it is important that teachers and other practitioners should intervene less and less throughout a child's play and learning. Steiner states that; " the adults sat at the table preparing the snack and observing, there was no need to interfere, guide or lead this play in any direction" (J. Nicol and S. Green; Bringing the Steiner Waldorf approach to your Early Years Practice). Similarly Montessori also state that; " this does not mean that the teacher abandons the child; they continue to observe and will lend a hand should the child need it" (B. Isaacs and S. Green; Bringing the Montessori approach to your Early Years Practice). Both the approaches believes that is a child is concentrating and is engaged within an activity, that the concentration and focus that the child has should not be broken. In both approaches the environments are set out differently to one another.

Within a Steiner room they will try to recreate a homelike environment using; pastel colours, drapes, quiet corners, seasonal tables and a floor area for them to build construction. However in a Montessori room, they do not have many of the children's work or informative displays, and they seem a lot barer to a Steiner room. Montessori believe that having displays can be of putting the children when they are concentrating on an activity. Montessori and Steiner have both adapted the role of repetition within their approaches. Within Montessori; repetition comes from the children learning and exploring. Children within the Montessori Education know that they are able to revisit resources/activities where they would like to build upon their knowledge and skills; " the child is happy to repeat the process; they are perfecting their skills through repetition" (B. Isaacs and S. Green; Bringing

the Montessori approach to your Early Years Practice). Throughout Steiner, repetition is key, as it is used daily to ensure that the children feel safe and secure, however they do use it similarly to Montessori; the use of repetition to form reassurance by doing something repetitively, “ the teacher is center of the kindergarten and therefore must be well prepared to build up the rhythm creatively” (J. Nicol and S. Green; Bringing the Steiner Waldorf approach to your Early Years Practice).

Another difference between the approaches is that; one focuses on fantasy and make believe and the other focuses on daily living skills, didactic learning and practical life, “ pupils are taught about culture and the world they live in from early on” ([http://www. guardian. co. uk/education/2005/jun/30/schools. uk1 4/01/2015](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/jun/30/schools.uk14/01/2015)), this is opposite to the Steiner pedagogy. Steiner believed “ fairy tales are told to older children and helps their inner life to become flexible and active”